

Seven Years in Vienna



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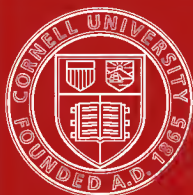
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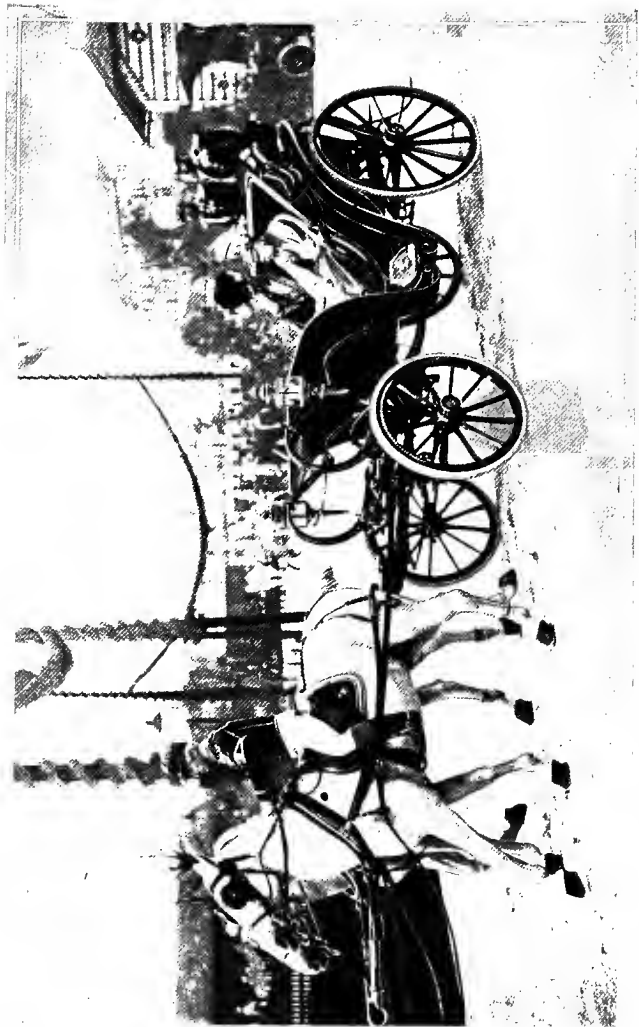


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SEVEN YEARS IN VIENNA



THE GERMAN EMPEROR AND THE EMPEROR OF AUSTRIA, DRIVING IN VIENNA, IN 1908.

SEVEN YEARS
IN
VIENNA

(August, 1907—August, 1914)

A RECORD OF INTRIGUE

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SEVEN YEARS IN VIENNA

CHAPTER I

KING EDWARD AT ISCHL—THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

It was mid-August in 1907. King Edward of England, who had been undergoing a "cure" at Marienbad, was expected at Ischl, where the Austrian Court was in residence. The whole place was hung with flags that were put up at the last moment, as the "Gem of the Salzkammergut," as Ischl is often called, is one of the wettest spots in the country. The local trains brought large numbers of peasants, in their picturesque costume, who wanted to take advantage of the opportunity of seeing the King of England. Other "peasants," in badly-fitting costumes, also came down in the Vienna night express. Their white knees, left bare beneath the short leather breeches, plainly showed that

they were not accustomed to wearing the Styrian costume. The peasant girls eyed them dubiously; one suggested that a little walnut-juice would improve matters, while their little brothers whispered "police." The real peasants crowded around the station, and watched the red carpet being laid, ready for royalty. They then turned to see Emperor Francis Joseph drive up to the gates. He arrived twenty minutes before the train was expected, as usual, for being a great stickler for etiquette he always feared that some accident or *contretemps* might delay him, and the visitor reach the station before the host. He dreaded nothing so much as a breach of etiquette or good manners, and was willing to take any trouble to avoid even the possibility of such a thing. The train from Marienbad steamed into the station, the monarchs embraced; their intercourse had always been most cordial. The King respected the simple old man, who had until then guided the destinies of his country with great astuteness; while the Emperor of Austria esteemed the statesman, for in Austria-Hungary and the Balkans King Edward was reckoned as the most skilful diplomatist of his time. As the Imperial carriage, with the gilt wheels, drove through the streets, the people cheered heartily.

King Edward was the most popular of foreign monarchs in Austria, and the minimum of precautions were taken for his safety. In spite of this the Austrian police, ever watchful, took stock of every fresh arrival in the place for days before the King appeared. On the morning of the visit they ascertained what persons would be seated in windows commanding the line of route, and carefully watched the houses that might harbour anarchist or other assassins. The uninitiated suspected nothing of all this. The long line of firemen that lined the streets looked like members of the local brigade. It was not suspected that they were specially trained men, who knew how to act and to co-operate at the right moment with the "peasants," also members of the same highly-organised force. They all stood apparently careless and inattentive. Presently a carriage, in which a spare, tall, pock-marked man was seated, drove through the street. He was the Emperor's private detective. His appearance always heralded that of the monarchs, and the firemen braced themselves for a combined movement, either to the right or left, forwards or backwards, as previously arranged. The police behind helped with the work, and just as the Imperial carriage flashed by, everyone in the crowd pushed for-

ward, sideways, or backwards, as though by accident. Any intending assassin would have lost his place at the front, and have missed the golden opportunity, through this clever manœuvre of the police. These precautions were always taken for every Royal visitor, for although Emperor Francis Joseph himself was accustomed to stroll about the Ischl woods, and went hunting in the forests quite unattended, he took care that his guests were exposed to no risks.

Everything went off as arranged, although there was a strained feeling in the air, partly due to the thundery weather. It was known, too, that King Edward was on a diplomatic tour throughout Europe, and the people knew that meetings of monarchs in summer are often of great importance, even when they are unaccompanied by their Ministers. Emperor Francis Joseph is practically a despotic monarch, for the Austro-Hungarian Constitution exists merely on paper. He alone decides the foreign policy of the country, and determines whether there shall be peace or war. Thus he is in a position to make decisions for his country, without consulting his Ministers. Austria-Hungary had long been quiet, almost to the point of stagnation. Her statesmen had been fully occupied

in paying off the burdens incurred during the last war, and were now delighted that, after a succession of deficits, they could at length turn out Budgets with surpluses at the end of the financial year.

There was trouble with Servia, it is true, Austrian machinations had deprived Servia of an outlet to the sea. Servia, being a pastoral and agricultural country, wished to sell her products, and Austria, the natural market, was closed to her.

The Austrians, who were very short of meat, promised to take over Servian meat, but the Hungarian agrarians, or large land-owners, who wanted to keep up the prices of their own products, managed to prevent this. They appointed veterinary surgeons to examine imported meat; and by unjustly condemning the Servian meat at the frontier, they succeeded in preventing its import. This line of conduct caused much greater discontent among the Servs than a downright refusal to admit their products would have done. They naturally objected to being cheated by their powerful and unscrupulous neighbours, and the friction caused by the "Servian Pig" question was continual. Otherwise the Balkans were strangely, almost uncannily, quiet. There were no mas-

sacres to report, no bands who roamed the country and committed depredations. It seemed that the two monarchs could have nothing to discuss. As the Emperor brought the King back to the Hotel Elisabeth in the afternoon, the faces of both monarchs could be seen very plainly in the blaze of the sun that was pouring down with great fierceness. Emperor Francis Joseph looked much older than he had done that morning. His face was drawn, the fine lines on the parchment-like skin were deepened. It did not need any unusual acuteness to see that something had gone wrong. King Edward walked up to his suite of rooms with something weary in his step. The Emperor, freed from the restraint of the King's presence, returned to the Imperial villa, his slight frame shrunk to half its usual size, his soldierly bearing gone.

All Ischl went home to dress for the gala performance at the tiny Court theatre. It was always difficult to get tickets at the bijou theatre when members of the Imperial family were expected; on the night of King Edward's visit it was impossible to obtain them. The police excluded all foreigners by careful manipulation. By evening it was already known in Ischl that the Emperor and the King had quarrelled violently. Attendants, posted behind doors, ready

to spring to attention, overhear many things. They could give no details of what the subject under discussion had been, but they said that Emperor Francis Joseph had lost his temper in the presence of a foreign King, and although outbursts of this kind were common enough within the family, it was an unprecedented thing in the presence of a stranger. They knew that the occasion had been no ordinary one, and that the future policy of the country had been under consideration.

Just as the curtain went up for the performance of some light musical comedy, the sort of play that is at its very best in Vienna, the thunderstorm that had been threatening all day long, broke outside. The rain rattled down on the roof of the theatre. The real heroine of the piece, who had been brought down from the capital on purpose, was a dazzlingly beautiful woman; she laughed, danced, and piroquetted all over the stage. She was the very embodiment of Vienna "cheek." Just at the end of the first act—royalty never sees a piece through when on State visits—she abruptly turned her back towards the Imperial box. She was lightly clad, even for the Austrian stage, as she tripped laughingly to the front, and carried out her instructions. A thrill went through the audience.

Would the King understand? His British phlegm stood him in good stead. He remained in his seat, although he was sufficiently acquainted with Austrian manners and customs to comprehend the somewhat heavy witticism. Only when the curtain fell did he rise and leave the theatre. "What was the meaning of the insult?" asked all Ischl. "What did it portend?" They learnt the answer just seven years later to the very day.

The people about the palace discussed the incident at the theatre. They understood that it was meant as a hint to the King that his presence in Austria was not desired, if he came to discuss politics. As a private friend and a brother monarch he was always welcome. He had attempted to show the Emperor that the close alliance with Germany was not for the good of Europe. Not merely that, but Austria-Hungary herself would imperil her existence as a great Power if she allowed herself to become merged in Germany. The aged Emperor, who had long been accustomed to depend upon Germany for assistance against the Slavs, would not listen to the King. He was perhaps aware that his policy was wrong, but being obstinate, like all the Habsburgs, he would not acknowledge it. He did not intend to alter his policy

at the eleventh hour, in any case. If there must be a change let his successor see to it. King Edward made due allowance for the Emperor's age, but it is doubtful whether he ever again made any direct effort to turn Austria from her fatal path. She stood at the parting of the ways. Her Emperor chose her destiny that summer day in Ischl. Diplomats and Ambassadors took up the King's task; they repeatedly pointed out the disastrous consequences of the close alliance with Germany. Instead of discussing the situation with Italy, Austria-Hungary informed Germany of what was happening. Instead of keeping the balance equal between Italy and Germany, Austria-Hungary really concluded a partnership with Germany; the Triple Alliance degenerated into a Dual Alliance that kept up an understanding with the third partner. Italy was quick to realise this. So long as Russia and France were allied, and occupied a position that was a set-off to that held by Germany and an Austria that had not given up her liberty of action, European peace was assured. Great Britain and Italy were not bound to their Allies to any great extent.

The result of the meeting at Ischl soon made itself felt. Italian diplomats began to back

out of their obligations towards Germany and Austria-Hungary. Their policy of "cooling down," at first barely perceptible, took form somewhat later, at the renewal of the Triple Alliance, when Italy promised very little in return for the many "benefits" heaped upon her by Germany. Great Britain, aware of the danger of the centre of the European chess-board being occupied by one vast State, stretching from the North Sea and Baltic to the Adriatic, was more inclined to listen to advances from France and Russia, and to deliberate upon the advantages of a closer contact with Germany's enemies. The suggestion made by France, that Great Britain should introduce conscription, prevented the understanding becoming anything more. France pointed out the necessity of preparing for an aggressive move on the part of Germany, but Great Britain would not even consider a proposition so far from her theories of government as was conscription.

CHAPTER II

THE EMPEROR'S ILLNESS

THE Austrian Court returned to Vienna as soon as the first snows on the mountains round Ischl gave warning that the summer season was at an end. Emperor Francis Joseph, who is a strenuous worker, and carries on the business of State daily, whether in residence in Vienna or in the country, began his life as usual. On certain days of the week he held general audiences, and received anyone, high or low, aristocrat or peasant, who wished to present a petition. He was always up at 4 a.m., and had got through most of his State duties by 8 a.m., when he began to receive Ministers and others. In the month of October it was suddenly announced that the Emperor was ill. The news caused great consternation, as the monarch had never been ill in his life. He had been confined to his room for some

time as a young man after an attempt made on his life, when he was stabbed in the neck, but he had never had the slightest ailment since. His life was carefully regulated by the Court physician, Doctor Kerzl, a military surgeon, a rough doctor of the old school, who had grown old with the Emperor. Members of the Imperial family frequently tried to have a younger and more up-to-date man appointed as Court physician. They considered that the Emperor's health was so precious that its care ought not to be confided to a man who had gained his experience with the Army. The Emperor, however, stood firm, and the results of the somewhat draconic treatment have certainly justified his decision. The Emperor sleeps on a camp-bed, eats the heavy Vienna food with relish, and is always accustomed to drive in an open carriage without his military cloak. It is probable that he took the chill during the drive.

Specialists were summoned to the Emperor's bedside, and they found that the Royal patient was suffering from inflammation of the lungs. He, however, refused to go to bed. Crowds of people went out to the summer palace of Schönbrunn, where he was staying, and waited under his window until he appeared to reassure

them, when cheers rang out and echoed along the arched corridors beneath the palace. The anxiety felt by the common people was shared by everyone in Austria-Hungary, and the one hope of high and low was that the Emperor might live. This was not so much on account of his personal popularity, although this was great, as because of the dread of the future. The heir to the throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, was the most hated man in Austria-Hungary. The Emperor's death meant that he would succeed to the throne. The Emperor himself felt a profound hatred for his heir, and it was a matter of common knowledge that he was filled with a firm determination not only to recover from his illness, but to outlive his heir. Day after day the struggle went on within the white walls of Schönbrunn Palace; the daily papers spoke of the Emperor's illness as a slight cold, for the monarch was not satisfied with reading extracts from the official organs, as was his ordinary custom, but insisted upon having all the papers, opposition organs as well as bounty-fed periodicals, brought to his room. He wished to find out whether the doctors were telling the truth about his illness. The three specialists came to the conclusion that he could not recover; Doctor Kerzl alone stood firm and

said that he would get well again. The Emperor refused to take to his bed, having a superstitious horror of lying down in the daytime. Kerzl supported him in this, and it is probable that he owed his recovery to it. The disputes among the doctors were unseemly, and the specialists insisted on calling the family to Vienna. Archduchess Gisela, the Emperor's elder daughter, arrived in great haste, and his younger daughter, Valerie, also appeared on the scene. Both women are very pious, and they immediately wished the Emperor to receive Extreme Unction. The Archbishop of Vienna, with a retinue of priests, actually came out to Schönbrunn to administer it, but they were met downstairs by Frau Catherina Schraatt, who told them that it would frighten him to death, and induced them to return without carrying out their mission. Archduke Francis Ferdinand arrived at the capital. He and his morganatic wife, Duchess Hohenberg, established themselves at the Belvedere Palace for the season. The Archduke, a man who lacked refinement and who was utterly devoid of tact, immediately began to act as if he had already succeeded to the throne. Statesmen, fearing that the Emperor would never recover, were afraid to oppose him, and he got an insight

into affairs of State during the Emperor's illness that enabled him to assume a position that he never gave up afterwards. The Habsburgs were obliged to look on while Duchess Hohenberg, then merely Countess Chotek, took a position that would never have been conceded to her had the Emperor been in his usual health. Kaiser Wilhelm, ever watchful, began to count on the possibility of the Emperor's death, and the friendship between him and the Archduke dates from this epoch. Kaiser Wilhelm did not like the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary; he recognised the fact that he would have to deal with a determined man, who knew exactly what he wanted and would refuse to believe the flattering assurances that satisfied Emperor Francis Joseph, who, although still in full command of his mental faculties, was beginning to feel the weight of years. The Emperor was never so acute a man as his heir; the Archduke, too, had a wife whose intelligence was remarkable. Countess Chotek was ambitious, and her husband was accustomed to following her advice in State affairs. Kaiser Wilhelm therefore shared the wish of the Austrian people, that the aged Emperor might long be spared to them. Week after week went by. People from all parts of the

monarchy sent the Emperor quaint remedies, charms, and specifics of all kinds to cure his illness; several officials were engaged all day in writing to thank the senders, who were not even aware of what ailed the Emperor. When it was finally announced that he was out of danger there was great jubilation throughout the realm; the people poured scorn upon the specialists, and acclaimed Dr. Kerzl as the saviour of the country whenever they could catch sight of his rough, honest face, bronzed by exposure upon many a battlefield. The Emperor had given his attendants great trouble during his illness and convalescence, as he had refused to allow anyone to enter his rooms except Dr. Kerzl, his soldier-valet, who slept upon a rug in the antechamber of his bedroom, and the sentry, who always paced to and fro outside the Emperor's bedchamber, and watched through a spyhole, cunningly made in the door, for any change. No woman was allowed to enter the suite of rooms during the night hours, the patient saying he preferred an orderly to nurse him.

Gradually the Emperor recovered his powers. He was never the same man again; his vigour was gone, and, although he was little changed in appearance, his grasp upon affairs had

weakened. The Archduke, who disliked Vienna cordially, remained in town, a thorn in the Emperor's side. The latter, however, could find no pretext for dismissing him to the country. Councillors, already anticipating the probable demise of the reigning monarch at no distant date, advised the Emperor to consult with his heir and to try to inculcate the inexperienced man with some of his statecraft. The Emperor was induced to bestow some powers upon the Archduke, although much against his will, and a new era in the history of the country began.

CHAPTER III

ARCHDUKE FRANCIS FERDINAND

ALL Europe was asking one and the same question at this epoch: "What kind of a man is the heir to the throne?"

They got the answer that he was "a little-known man," and this was true to a certain extent. The Emperor, an old autocrat, never allowed any member of the Imperial family to take a leading part in public affairs. They were expected to do their duty in opening charitable institutions, presiding at *fêtes* in provincial cities, but in both Vienna and Budapesth they found it advisable to keep well in the background. Whenever a young Archduke became too popular, even in the ballrooms of Vienna, he was promptly banished to some out-of-the-way place, ostensibly on a mission, but really as a punishment for presuming to court popularity.

This was well understood among the Habsburgs, who, as a rule, did not care for Court life. Most of the Archdukes lived on their country estates, where they enjoyed almost regal power for nine months of the year, merely coming to Court to pay their respects to the monarch at the New Year.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand was very fond of power and very ambitious, but he did not care for playing the *rôle* of heir to the throne when he had reached middle age and was at the height of his powers. He therefore remained in the country for the greater part of the year.

This did not increase his popularity. People grumbled at the sadness that hung like a pall over the Court. They said that it was merely a resort for military men and officials, and wished that young life could be introduced to restore Vienna and Budapesth to their former gaiety. Archduke Francis Ferdinand had laboured under great disadvantages since sudden and unexpected events had made him heir to the throne. His attendants and the Court officials summed up the position in one sentence: "He has never been trained for a throne." He was entirely lacking in tact—a quality which, if not a natural gift, must be acquired by painful experience by personages

who will one day occupy a throne. He spoke no languages except his own. He had, of course, some knowledge of French and Italian, and was learning Hungarian; but he was not in a position to carry on delicate negotiations in French. He had a bad record even for an Austrian Archduke. His youthful career had been full of incident, and his doctors had been compelled to put a sudden stop to a course of youthful dissipation by sending him on a voyage round the world. He was reported to be suffering from consumption in its preliminary stages, and it was said his only chance of life was a complete change of climate. The Archduke, who was an artist and well acquainted with ancient and modern culture, started off on the Imperial yacht for the East with nothing but pleasurable feelings. His favourite study was ethnology, and he made a collection of objects of great interest during this voyage. They were to be seen in one of the galleries of the Hofburg, which had recently been added to the main block of the town palace. The Archduke converted the new part into a museum, as the Emperor had forbidden the architect to fit the new building with lifts or other modern appliances. Lifts he hated, and firmly refused to enter one even when he was

having his portrait painted by an artist whose studio was on the sixth floor of a Vienna house.

The Archduke, who was intensely modern, decided that a palace without lifts and proper heating appliances was not fit to live in, and promptly converted the new gallery into a picture gallery and museum without waiting for the Emperor's advice or permission.

The aged Emperor and his heir clashed in every direction; they were diametrically opposed in all their tastes and convictions. Both were pious to an exaggerated degree. The Emperor disliked the Jesuits; his heir consorted with them constantly, and listened to their advice in matters of State. This alone would have been sufficient to prevent the Emperor from ever wishing him to succeed to the throne. The Archduke, too, although so pious, had contrived to estrange both the Church and the Emperor by one act of boyish folly. As a young officer he was stationed at a depôt in the depths of the country to learn his profession, far from critical crowds. One day he was riding across the fields, when some peasants, carrying the mortal remains of one of their fellows, crossed by the footpath. The Archduke, in a fit of youthful exuberance, set his horse at the bier and cleared it at a jump. The

priest protested at the act of sacrilege. The story reached the ears of the Emperor, who never forgave him. Although the Archduke was not careful of the feelings of the Roman Catholics, the non-Catholics in the country believed that he would be capable of persecuting them with a rigour such as had been unknown since the Middle Ages. At the time of the Emperor's illness the Liberal papers prophesied in their leading articles that he would build up martyr fires around the Cathedral of St. Stefan, in the centre of Vienna. They said he would show the utmost relentlessness in burning or hanging his Jewish, Protestant, and Mahommedan subjects, all of whom were accustomed to a wide tolerance, based on indifference to them and their doings. The Archduke was bitterly hated in Hungary; it was commonly reported that his life was not safe in that part of his future kingdom. He gave colour to these reports by his strange conduct. When he went down to Budapesth he did not put up at an hotel, as was customary. He remained all night in the royal train, which was run up the line to a siding, no one being aware of the exact spot at which it had drawn up. This confession of fear and lack of confidence in the loyalty of his subjects did the Archduke great harm. The

alternative explanation, sometimes advanced, that the Archduke, who was known as the meanest man in the kingdom, merely wished to save an hotel bill, did not improve matters. The hotel-keepers looked upon members of the Imperial House as most desirable guests; they never overcharged them, for the advertisement was worth a great deal to them. Archdukes who neither commanded a palace to be prepared for their coming nor put up at an hotel were naturally not popular with anyone. Archduke Francis Ferdinand crowned all his other delinquencies by his marriage. Instead of contracting an alliance with some powerful reigning house, he made a morganatic marriage with a lady-in-waiting. Countess Chotek was a Bohemian aristocrat, it is true, but she was not a peer of any member of the House of Habsburg. The Emperor allowed the marriage to take place, and when all the circumstances are taken into account, especially the ease with which persons whose existence was disagreeable to the Vienna Court were removed, it can only be concluded that the Emperor approved of the marriage. He evidently did not wish the children of the Archduke to come to the throne on account of their father's tendency to tuberculosis, which was reported to have gone to the

brain. It was common knowledge that the Archduke was accustomed to fly into fearful rages. Whether this habit, which is common to all the Habsburgs, was owing to epilepsy, or some obscure brain disease, it is difficult to say; but the Emperor evidently shared the common feeling that it was some obscure affection of the brain, and shared the doctors' opinion that the Archduke's descendants ought not to come to the throne of Austria-Hungary.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who was always short of money, tried to engage in business, and, as usually happens with men of his position, made a sad failure of it. Instead of leaving the management of his estates to stewards, who would only take their customary perquisites, he engaged in business transactions himself. He was badly swindled, and gained a reputation for meanness which was richly deserved. His varied excursions into the realms of speculative business were attended by no better luck. He dared not associate himself with eminent business men, so he summoned a number of companions to his side who were difficult to shake off. With them he embarked upon business of an illegitimate kind. His only excuse was his complete lack of understanding of all matters relating to business.



THE DUCHESS HOHENBERG,
WIFE OF THE ARCHDUKE.



THE ARCHDUKE FRANCIS FERDINARD.

Neither Archduke Francis Ferdinand nor his morganatic wife had the tact or sense to hide the impatience with which they awaited the aged Emperor's death. The "parrot" story, as it was called, went the round of the Vienna *cafés* at this period. A bird of very rare plumage, evidently the property of some aristocratic personage, was found straying in the public gardens of Vienna. A gardener promptly caught it and took it round to the police, where lost property of all kinds was deposited, until its owner could be found. The sergeant in charge put the bird in a cage and forgot all about it. Shortly afterwards he was startled to hear the parrot begin to discourse with great fluency when it had become used to its surroundings. It referred to various members of the Imperial family in terms of the very scantiest respect. "That old cat Valerie" was its delicate way of referring to the Emperor's younger and favourite daughter. "Peacocks, sluts" were terms of abuse applied to Archduchesses who either overdressed or neglected their toilettes. The sergeant became pale with fright. It was *lèse-majesté* to listen to such words, and the penalty might be death. When the parrot broke into a steady stream of talk, with a kind of refrain, "He'll live to be a hundred, Sofie," in an exact

imitation of the gruff tones of the heir to the throne, who was evidently referring to the Emperor, the sergeant felt that any further eaves-dropping would be dangerous. He picked up a cloth, threw it over this utterer of high treason, and carried the loquacious bird to the chief of the police. The cloth was removed, and the indignant parrot, unused to such treatment, began worse than before. The sergeant was dispatched in all haste to find a very thick black cloth that might be calculated to damp even the ardour of an Imperial parrot, and, carefully wrapped up, the bird was sent to the Belvedere, where the Archduke and his wife were in residence.

CHAPTER IV

COUNTESS CHOTEK

COUNTESS CHOTEK, afterwards Duchess Hohenberg, the morganatic wife of the late Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was a most remarkable woman, and her history is perhaps the most romantic that was ever written. She belonged to an impoverished Bohemian family, which ranked high among the ancient aristocracy of that nation. She was brought up very quietly and was accustomed, as a girl, to ride in the tramway in Dresden, where her father held a post in the Diplomatic Service. Her dresses were very plain, even for an aristocrat. The peculiar charm that she possessed, however, made her an object of much attention. She was a big blonde, as stately as an empress, and at the same time a woman who knew how to make herself agreeable in conversation, as her life had given her an intimate knowledge of men

and things that was unusual in a woman belonging to a noble family, in Austria-Hungary, where the little aristocrats are convent-bred, and never encouraged to form opinions of their own upon the current topics of the hour. She was very ambitious, and intelligent to an extraordinary degree. She was a woman who knew just what she wanted, and who would not have hesitated to use any means that were necessary for the attainment of her object. She made her entrance into the Austrian Imperial family in a very subordinate position. She became lady-in-waiting to the beautiful daughters of Archduke Frederick, the richest of all the Archdukes. Her life in his family was probably not disagreeable, but decidedly monotonous, as the family spent most of the time on lonely country estates in Hungary. Archduke Francis Ferdinand frequented the Vienna palace, on the Albrecht Platz, where Archduke Frederick lived when in residence at Court. Everyone believed that he was about to marry one of the Archduke's daughters, and the match was regarded as a good one. The girls had large dowries, and relationship between the heir to the throne and the branch of the family to which they belonged was very distant. It is probable that the Archduke had some such arrangement in his mind

when he visited the house. He, however, fell violently and irretrievably in love with the lady-in-waiting, a woman in the early thirties, and regarded as long past marriageable age in Court circles. The romantic story of the marriage is well known, but the fact that the Archduke, in marrying the lady-in-waiting, made an inveterate enemy of Archduke Frederick was never appreciated at its proper value abroad. In Vienna itself the gravity of the position was well understood. No better-class tradesman in Austria would allow such an insult to his daughters to go unrevenged, for the Austrian father is very jealous of his daughters' reputation. No young man is permitted to visit at a house regularly without having the clearest "intentions." At the Court this unwritten law is much stricter than among the people. The Archduke, in selecting the lady-in-waiting, was casting a slur upon the Archduchesses she attended. Fortunately, there were several girls, and as he had never singled out any one of them for particular attention, there was no open rupture. It is certain, however, that the Archduke behaved in a very ungentlemanly way, and that his conduct was totally lacking in delicacy. Archduke Frederick never forgave the insult, and the

other members of the House of Habsburg sympathised with him in his wrath at the incident. Indeed, the outraged father had plenty of occasion to remember it. His daughter, Archduchess Isabella, who had hoped to become the future Empress of Austria, made an unfortunate marriage later on. Her parents, by way of settling the incident of the heir to the throne, and laying the ghosts of rumours that still hung round the girl's name, arranged a match with Prince George of Bavaria. The Archduchess, who hated the young man, actually set fire to her wedding-dress on the eve of the marriage, hoping that it would be put off, as she had nothing suitable to wear. .

Incidentally, she set fire to the palace, and a valuable collection of pictures in the adjacent museum was threatened. The marriage took place on the morrow, a dress having been hurriedly contrived for the occasion. The girl fled from her husband on the wedding journey, and afterwards became a Red Cross nurse. For these misfortunes the Archduke was regarded as primarily responsible and they served to make Countess Chotek still more detestable to the Imperial family.

On his marriage Archduke Francis Ferdinand renounced all rights to the throne and to any

dignities or privileges belonging to members of the House of Habsburg for his heirs. He and his wife withdrew into obscurity, where a family of beautiful children was born to them. This led Countess Chotek to dream of altering the laws of succession and securing the throne for her eldest son. With this ulterior object in view she came to Vienna at the time of the Emperor's illness, and tried to force her way into Court society. Her rank entitled her to be received at Court, but not to be admitted into the magic circle of the Austrian Imperial family as one of themselves. The etiquette of the Vienna Court is the strictest in Europe, and is based upon that ruling at the Spanish Court. The members of the Habsburg family are all extremely simple, but they permit no liberties to be taken either with themselves or the family. Countess Chotek, as she was then, appeared at the Court ball unannounced. She intended to surprise the Master of the Ceremonies, and force him to allow her to enter with the Archduchesses. The old man did not lose his presence of mind. He met the difficulty in a very clever way. The married Archduchesses walked in first, each with her cavalier, selected especially for the honour. After the long procession of handsome stately dames with flowing trains had passe

into the brilliantly-lighted room, the young Archduchesses who were presented at Court for the first time were led into the hall, each on the arm of a handsome young officer. Eight girls, dressed in simple muslin gowns that barely reached to their ankles, and looking very childish, as none was more than eighteen years of age, came next in the long procession. The Master of the Ceremonies, who had detained Countess Chotek, found her a place, on the left arm of the last cavalier, the youngest of the Archduchesses occupying the post of honour on the right. Countess Chotek entered the ball-room inwardly raging. Everyone noticed the insult, as the other ladies all had a cavalier to themselves. The next morning the Vienna newspapers alluded to the slight which had been put upon the wife of the heir to the throne, and said that the Master of the Ceremonies should have remembered that the Countess was a woman, and have refrained from so pointed an insult. Archduke Francis Ferdinand and his wife left Vienna the next day as a protest, and this was the last occasion upon which he tried to force his wife upon the Court.

Kaiser Wilhelm, whose emissaries always kept him well informed of every event, big or little, in Vienna, heard of the incident. Now

was the time for him to interfere. The Archduke, who had always turned a deaf ear to blandishments from Berlin, would now be accessible. The man who was too strong to care to hear flattery of himself would lend a willing ear to any defence of his beautiful wife, who had been grossly insulted. The Archduke became more deeply attached to his wife every year; the inconveniences to which he was subjected for her sake only strengthened his affection. When, therefore, an invitation for the Archduke and his wife came from Berlin it was gratefully accepted. Kaiser Wilhelm, whose wife, the Empress, has never been allowed to have much voice in things, placed Countess Chotek in the place of honour, and, what is vastly more important, caused the fact to be chronicled in the German and Austrian papers. The Archduchesses in Vienna raged inwardly, for Countess Chotek, the "scullery-maid," as they were in the habit of calling her, was being received with Royal honours, and the rank accorded to her in Berlin was such as would be given to a future Empress. Kaiser Wilhelm won a warm friend by this clever manœuvre, which incidentally cost him nothing.

The Archduke did not come to Vienna on representative occasions after this episode, but

he kept in close touch with the Foreign Minister, Count Aehrenthal, who looked to him for guidance instead of to the Emperor. The War Minister went to the Archduke's Bohemian palace when he wanted large estimates passed, and induced the Archduke to exert his influence in this direction. Meanwhile the favourite occupation of the Archduke continued to be gardening, and this taste took him all over Europe. The Court Chronicle never spoke of the Archduke. An accidental paragraph in some foreign paper would reveal the fact that he and the Countess were in Holland, attending sales of bulbs. He even went to England incognito on several occasions to visit far-famed gardens. It is doubtful, in the light of later events, whether all these journeys were connected solely with gardening, although the Archduke was a passionate horticulturist. Countess Chotek always accompanied her husband, and when, in the early spring, he went to Miramare, near Trieste, or to the fairy-like island of Brioni, she and the children went too. The Archduke spent his time in superintending the building of small swift cruisers, in inspecting wireless telegraphic installations on the coast, and in keeping the naval experts employed at high pressure. He was the first Archduke who

was interested in the sea, the aged Emperor caring so little for marine affairs that he did not even possess a naval uniform among the large and miscellaneous collection in his wardrobe.

Countess Chotek, like many not born to the purple, made mistakes of a kind that did not add to her popularity. Her husband had great possessions, and owned art treasures of inestimable worth, but they were far from being a source of revenue. In fact his income was not sufficient to keep them up properly. His wife had brought him no dowry. His growing family was a source of expense. Thus ready money was a scarcity in the family. Countess Chotek tried to economise on her personal expenses, instead of leaving it to her stewards, who understood where a woman of that rank can be mean and where she must be munificent. She became involved in many discreditable *affaires* through her stinginess. One of these was a dispute with a cabby at Salzburg. The Countess committed an unheard-of indiscretion—she took a one-horsed cab. No lady, *en toilette*, can ride in a one-horsed cab in Austria. If really poor she can ride in the electric tramway, but for some occult reason the cab is taboo. She must either take a fiacre with a pair of dashing steeds, or a motor-car. Countess Chotek not only hailed a

one-horsed cab, when a row of handsome and well-fitted fiacres stood by, but refused to pay the fare the cabby demanded. He had recognised the lady, and naturally thought that she would stand imposition, as ladies of the Imperial family never go about unattended, and the only explanation to his unsophisticated mind was that the Countess was on clandestine business of some kind, and should be blackmailed for it. To his astonishment she marched him off to the police-station herself. The police condemned the unfortunate cabby to a fine, but the Countess Sofia was felt to be in the wrong. What had possessed her to ride in an "Einspanner"? An elopement with the groom or automobile chauffeur was quite an ordinary incident among the aristocracy and speedily forgotten, but such a mistake as going in the wrong kind of cab was more than a misdemeanour, it was a lack of *savoir vivre* that the country could never forgive.

CHAPTER V

VIENNA

IF you ask an educated, reflecting Austrian under what form of Government he lives, he will reply, "The Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary is an absolute monarch; we live under a despotism tempered by carelessness." And he will laugh flippantly. "So long as one man, the Emperor, has the right to decide whether there will be peace or war, without appealing to his Ministers, the Constitution is a mere mockery. We owe the only liberties we enjoy to the slackness in the administration of the laws of the realm; we have no rights." "How is it that the country has never demanded its rights?" "Those who ask awkward questions in this country are hanged or exiled . . . Those who wish to remain here keep a still tongue in their heads . . . We are talking treason now, and there are spies everywhere." Other Austrians

belonging to the intellectual class explain that the men in power encourage frivolity systematically, and provide amusement for the people to prevent their thinking or reflecting. Certain it is that Vienna before the war was the chief centre of gaiety in Europe.

In spite of the sombre shadow cast over the Court, the city lived for amusement. It was the only thing that the Viennese really understood. In Advent things are relatively quiet; there is the same round of gaiety as later in the year, but the toilettes are sombre, and everything is on a less magnificent scale than in Fasching, the time between the Court Ball—when the Emperor opens the real season—and the beginning of Lent. The winter of 1908 was particularly gay. There was skating all day and dancing all night. Light sleds carried the girls to balls when the snow had frozen hard and horses, in their spiked shoes, could not get any grip on the slippery paving-stones. Others went in the electric tramway, which ran even when the temperature was far below freezing-point, and the drivers were provided with astrachan masks and goggles, to prevent their eyelids freezing to their cheeks. There were balls every night given by different societies and corporations of all grades and degrees,

from the artists' ball to the chimney-sweeps' dance. No one ever dreamt of staying at home during Fasching. Such details as lack of dress, money or chaperones made no difference. If you had no dress you borrowed a domino and went to a masked ball. The balls often lasted far into the next day, sometimes only closing at four in the afternoon. Everyone can dance, and did dance through the festive season, except small children, who were learning their steps at the dancing-school. Many began to dance and skate before they were firm on their feet, their parents so dreaded their not being skilled in the things that "really mattered." Old men did not stay at home; they sat in a favourite café, where a table was reserved for them, ever since they had been saluted as "Herr Doctor" for the first time by the waiter who judged that they had reached manhood. The rule universally accepted, and put into practice by rich and poor alike, was: "Enjoy yourself while you can, you never know what the morrow may bring." In the case of the Viennese it only brought new varieties of enjoyment. No considerate employer expected his staff to turn up in full numbers after a *redoute*. Sleep was rare in the season. Many young men never went to bed at all night after night; they left the ball-room at

dawn, took an ice-cold dip, and repaired to the next café, where they drank cup after cup of strong black coffee, to enable them to keep awake during office hours. The employer said nothing so long as the work was done.

After the ball it was the rule to visit the music-halls and night cafés, and this continual gaiety left no time or inclination to discuss politics or criticise rulers. Everyone was contented and satisfied with things as they were. They made no excuse for their frivolity. In fact a man who showed no disposition to join in the round of gaiety immediately became "suspect." An officer had more chances of making a career for himself if he were a good dancer and could pirouette his way into the good graces of the commander's aged wife than if he spent hours over maps and plans. His brother officers wondered why he wished to investigate things. . . . Was he selling information to Russia?

At this epoch winter sports were beginning to become a factor in the life of the Austrians. Some girls asked their fathers to give them the money ear-marked for balls to spend on ski and a winter outfit. In the middle classes the innovation was not regarded as an advantage. Winter sports cost more than balls. The

girls were inclined to become too emancipated, and their mothers spent anxious hours wondering whether they had not taken cold or met with accidents. In the upper classes winter sports and dancing were combined. The Austro-Hungarian aristocrat is accustomed to an outdoor life, and the lower classes, too, went ski-ing in the mountains just outside Vienna. The Government, quick to see that it would be an advantage to have soldiers trained to use skis for the army, encouraged winter sports, put on cheap trains and extra trams to enable the people to go in for it thoroughly.

The army of dressmakers, shoemakers, florists, and others who live by manufacturing articles for the ball season naturally disapproved of winter sports; but it is doubtful whether the new fashion really made much difference to them, for the ball-rooms seemed as full as ever.

There were large numbers of strangers in both Vienna and Budapesth; curiously enough they were almost without exception people from within the Empire or from the Balkans. Vienna was always the capital of the Balkans. The women came to shop there, girls were sent to finishing schools in the capital, and it was a kind of Mecca to which men from far-off places in

Rumania dreamed of coming once in their lives. The Balkan kings visited Vienna, and reaped credit with their peoples from having sat side by side with the Emperor, the great stickler for etiquette, the arbiter of rank for the East.

Such was Vienna, and such were to a lesser degree the provincial cities of Austria-Hungary, which all modelled themselves on the capital, when Kaiser Wilhelm of Germany and the heir to the throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, decided to embark upon an aggressive policy. The Archduke fondly believed that the idea originated with himself, and that he was right in taking advantage of the temporary disablement of the aged Emperor to strike a blow for his country's aggrandisement. He did not see that he was doing an unwise thing in listening to the counsels of a neighbouring monarch, whose interests were by no means identical with those of his own country, and acting on these promptings, without consulting the Emperor. Count Aehrenthal, the Foreign Minister, was a creature of the new *régime*, and he took his instructions from the coming man. Changes of policy for the Dual Monarchy are usually announced at the meeting of the Delegations, an assembly of members of the Austrian and of the Hungarian Parliaments, who are delegated

by their fellows to represent them at the meeting. The Delegations, which sit in Vienna and in Budapesth alternatively, vote supplies for all objects common to the two countries, such as the army and navy. The small check that the Austrian and Hungarian Parliaments can put on their rulers lies here. The members of the Delegations, however, were men who had axes to grind and seldom interfered with the programme announced by the Foreign Minister.

It was at a meeting of the Delegations in Vienna, in the winter of 1908, that Baron Aehrenthal announced the fact that Austria-Hungary had embarked upon an aggressive policy. The days of quiet and tranquillity were over; the country intended to join in the march forward. It only sought commercial expansion, it is true, but it was prepared to face all and any consequences.

CHAPTER VI

SALONICA

AEHRENTHAL sketched a programme of commercial extension in the Near East. The first step to be taken was the building of the Sanjak railway. The Sanjak is a narrow strip of barren land which was at that period occupied by Austrian troops. Aehrenthal now proposed to build a railway through the Sanjak, with the terminus at Salonica. This railway would give Austria-Hungary the control of the Balkans as far as trade questions were concerned. Salonica would virtually become Austrian property, not by the force of conquest, but by the natural sequence of events. It had long been plain that the Turkish Empire was crumbling. None knew better than the Austrians that the hour for the final dissolution of the Turkish Empire had come. It therefore behoved Austria-Hungary to anticipate her rivals and to secure the most

important port—Salonica. The building of the Sanjak railway would have shortened the route to the East by many hours. Many statesmen in Austria-Hungary did not approve of the Sanjak project. There was an alternative and much quicker route over Albania. If a railway could be built from Durazzo or Vallona across to Salonica, two days could be saved on the route to the East. Many statesmen favoured this plan. The Sanjak was a death-trap, they said; the line would run through gullies among mountains where enemies could command it. Besides the danger of enemy forces in case of war, the wild bands of half-civilised folk in the Balkans must be considered too. They might plunder the train at any time; it would be very easy to hold it up between the steep defiles. In Albania there was flat, fertile country that would be vastly more suited for railway building; it could, besides, be opened up with advantage. The only trouble with regard to Albania was that there was a treaty between Austria and Italy regarding any occupation of that country. If Austria took northern Albania, as she hoped to do, Italy was to have the southern part. Vallona, the best harbour on the Adriatic, lay in the part claimed by Italy.

Thus Austria-Hungary hesitated between

two alternative schemes. The German element in Austria was for pushing towards Salonica over the Sanjak. The idea had come from Berlin, and had been carefully suggested to Austrian diplomatists by the Emperor's advisers. Aehrenthal announced it publicly at the Delegations, and waited to see what effect his audacious move would have upon Europe. The Greeks sitting in the café in the Fleischmarkt in Vienna were the first on that memorable night of the Delegations' meeting to catch up the words, "To Salonica." "Salonica is Greek," they said. "If it is wrested from the Turks, it must fall to Greece." Twenty-four hours later Europe said what it thought of Austria's plans of expansion. The old Emperor, Francis Joseph, who had probably listened in a semi-comatose condition, as he frequently did, to the report made by his Foreign Minister on the Sanjak railway, summoned him to Schönbrunn in haste. There, in his characteristic way, in language so plain that there was no mistaking it, and that would have done credit to a Vienna cabby, the Emperor forbade any thoughts of a forward policy. He had had misfortunes enough in his long reign, he said. If any innovation was to be made it could be undertaken by his successor; for the rest of his



BARON AEHRENTHAL.

life there would be quiet. He understood that Russia was aghast at Austria's plans of aggression, England was furious, and France asking what it all meant. The announcement made at the Delegations might be regarded as unspoken.

Strange to say, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, agreed with the Emperor. He considered that the forward movement in the Balkans planned by Aehrenthal was ill-judged. He was aware that Kaiser Wilhelm and the "German" party in Austria desired to open the road to the East. The Archduke, however, took a much clearer view of the political situation than the Kaiser and his advisers. He grasped the very obvious fact that Italy was not a willing member of the Triple Alliance. She was only waiting for an excuse that would sound at all plausible to break loose from her bonds. Why the Archduke should be keenly aware of a fact that was never even suspected by Kaiser Wilhelm is not easy to say. Perhaps the intensity of his hatred enabled him to read the national character aright, for the Archduke hated Italy with a bitter hatred. He possessed estates in Italy, and considered that the Italian Courts of Justice had treated him unfairly in a series of law suits he had had about his property there. Moreover, there were dif-

ferences of temperament between the Austrians and Italians. Francis Ferdinand was essentially a "German" Austrian—that is to say, an Austrian with leanings towards Prussian methods, who wished to have the Austrian army reorganised on Prussian methods. There was something in the Italian character that roused the Archduke's anger; both he and Kaiser Wilhelm felt the rage, often manifested by the savage for things he cannot understand, at Italy and Italy's methods. This common dislike for Italy which possessed both men was doubtless due to a remarkable and startling change in the Italian character. During the last twenty years the Italians have organised themselves on German lines; the Italian of to-day has all the efficiency of the Prussian without his cumbersome methods. When Kaiser Wilhelm went to Italy unexpectedly to visit his friends there, he found hydroplanes that excelled those at home moving about in the limpid waters of the Adriatic. He went to Miramare, swelling with anger. Both he and Francis Ferdinand were sufficiently intelligent to take in the position at a glance. Italy was like a child that had stolen a march upon the world in a night by attaining to her full stature while the others slept. Both raged at the unexpected turn things had taken. While

Kaiser Wilhelm was anxious to keep Italy as an ally, because Germany and Austria-Hungary had so small a coast-line, Francis Ferdinand, with much truer insight into the interests of his country, said, "Fall upon Italy unexpectedly and crush her." Kaiser Wilhelm realised that the Austro-Hungarian fleet would only be of use if it could emerge from the Adriatic. Bottled up in the inland sea by the Italian fleet it was a negligible quantity. He did not comprehend the bitter hatred felt by every Italian for the ancient oppressor, the Austrian. He probably knew little of the ways in which Italians in Austria were persecuted, in spite of the existence of the Triple Alliance. The Government went about its work in a very wary manner, and incidents which would have opened his eyes were carefully hushed up. It is probable, too, that the Austrians deceived the Kaiser as to the attitude of the Italians. Every Austrian knew in his heart that there could never be anything but war between the two countries. The manner in which they habitually alluded to the Italians was sufficient to prove their intense hate. The Italian subjects living in Austria reciprocated this sentiment in full. Whenever they found an opportunity of paying back some of the Austrian hate for them, they availed

themselves of the chance. Archduke Francis Ferdinand always used his influence to prevent Austro-Italians rising to power. He had officials in Trieste removed from their posts merely because they were "Italians." Their places were taken by Slavs, who regarded the Archduke as their protector. As a matter of fact, the Slavs were the only people in Austria-Hungary who respected and liked the heir to the throne. The Germans despised him. The Hungarians frankly detested him, and the Italians execrated him. The Bohemians, the Croats, and the Serbs, all Slav races, regarded him as their representative. In the racial contests for place and power in Dalmatia, in Istria, the Slavs who wished to oust the Italians from their places appealed to the Archduke, and immediately got what they wanted, while the Czechs, who were in deadly antagonism with the Germans in Bohemia, had a powerful advocate in Countess Chotek. When the German officials tried to introduce the teaching in German instead of the Czech language into elementary schools in Bohemia in Czech districts, the Archduke stood by them and prevented any encroachment by the German element.

Thus Emperor Francis Joseph and his heir agreed, although from different motives, in pre-

venting the plan of the building of the Sanjak railway being pursued. Kaiser Wilhelm, who had taken no part in the disputes that were raging in Vienna, was glad that the idea of Austria-Hungary's embarking on an aggressive policy should be ventilated, but did not wish her to take any course that might lead to war either in the Balkans or with Italy. Neither country was prepared to embark on an aggressive world-war. Kaiser Wilhelm encouraged Austro-Hungarian statesmen to contemplate a series of wars with poor and helpless neighbours, such as Italy, Montenegro, and Serbia, but he was really thinking of executing his projects, of placing Germany "über alles!" He knew that this idea of aggressive warfare would render it easier for the German party to obtain the armaments required for the coming struggle, while public opinion in the country would become accustomed to the idea of a policy of expansion. He cared little that the Archduke was preparing for a *coup* upon Italy when he was contemplating a blow in the opposite direction. The necessity for realising his plans made Kaiser Wilhelm regard all means justifiable, even the deception of his allies.

The storm raised by the Sanjak railway project gradually calmed down, and Count Aehren-

thal, balked in his plans, retired to the background to work out fresh plans for Austro-Hungarian aggrandisement; while Archduke Francis Ferdinand, still sore at the Court Ball incident, sulked upon his magnificent estate at Konospischt, in Bohemia, where he superintended his wonderful collection of exotic plants and tried to forget Vienna the dusty, that was so bad for his lungs.

Kaiser Wilhelm became increasingly aware that the immediate necessities of the situation rendered it important to gain Archduke Francis Ferdinand to his side. The Kaiser was painfully conscious that neither the aged Emperor nor his heir had any real regard for him. They were inclined to look upon him as an upstart in many ways. The Kaiser's sudden excursions into realms that they regarded as distinctly not regal annoyed them. What need had the Emperor of Germany to seek distinction as a writer of plays? By such tricks he brought down the whole level of royalty. All the Habsburgs are eminently dignified, and Kaiser Wilhelm always seemed something of a royal mountebank to them, with his strange longings after artistic fame, his childish wish for popularity—a matter of the most complete indifference to his brother monarch in Vienna.

CHAPTER VII

KAISER WILHELM IN VIENNA

VIENNA, startled for an instant by the events connected with the meeting of the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, soon sank back again into complete apathy as regards foreign politics. The Sanjak railway was forgotten and everyone was thinking of how the short time between Easter and the "Derby," the final event of the Vienna summer season, was to be spent, when news came that Kaiser Wilhelm was about to visit Vienna. He proposed to come to celebrate the aged Emperor's jubilee and to bring his whole family with him. The Viennese considered this most tactless. Emperor Francis Joseph had lost his only son in a drunken brawl, and now his professed friend wished to remind him of the fact by bringing a family of handsome young men to accentuate the contrast between the lonely old man and the Kaiser in

the prime of life, surrounded by his six sons. The Kaiser secretly planned another "honour" for the Emperor. All the Federal Princes were to arrive in Vienna before the Kaiser and to await him on the platform. The Kaiser arranged for them and their retinue to reach Vienna separately and almost in secrecy. No receptions were to be given them on arrival. He only broke the news to the Emperor privately when all the arrangements were complete and some of the Princes already on their way to Vienna. The Emperor thereupon lost his temper, which had already been sorely tried by the proposal to bring so many Imperial Princes. He sent a message to say that his health would not allow of him receiving anyone excepting the Kaiser. The Kaiser had to abandon his plan, which was to have the Emperor of Austria and the German Federal Princes grouped together on the little platform at Penzing, awaiting his arrival "like the rising sun," as the Vienna papers put it, and allow the Emperor to do homage to him among his vassals, thus recognising him as overlord of all the German-speaking peoples.

The Press said what it thought of the Kaiser's overweening ambition, and he was very surprised. The Austrians were not so stupid as

he had thought. They had grasped his plan to make himself the man of the hour instead of leaving the first place to the monarch whose jubilee was being celebrated.

Wilhelm's fertile, restless brain had hardly abandoned one project before it conceived another. He left his bevy of handsome sons at home, but took his only daughter with him to Vienna. The heir to the Austrian throne, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, had made a morganatic marriage; his children could not succeed. Archduke Carl Francis Joseph, the son of Archduke Otto, who had lately died a horrible death, would be the next heir. Why should Princess Louise not become Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary? There was the little difficulty about religion, but that could be managed. Louise and her mother, the Empress, were informed that they would be allowed to accompany the Kaiser. It is likely that the ladies had but small notice, for Princess Louise wore skirts that were perfectly appropriate to the palace at Potsdam, where she ranked as the greatest tomboy of the family, but they were decidedly too short and too tight for the Austrian Court, where ample petticoats are *de rigueur*. A tall, thin girl, looking absolutely irrepressible, stalked up the platform

by her mother's side. Distracted ladies-in-waiting had attempted to teach her the Austrian Court curtsey—a most complicated manœuvre that takes years to learn. They also tried to instil some ideas of the strictness of the Austrian Court etiquette into her mind. She was the terror of the palace at home; the ladies-in-waiting stood in great awe of the spoilt child. They trembled when their turn to attend upon Her Royal Highness came round. They feared what would happen when she got to Vienna. The change from the free and easy manners of the Berlin Court to the unchangeable rules and regulations of Vienna was enough to upset a more placid girl. All the bowing and smiling upset Princess Louise, whose education had been very "Protestant." She put out her tongue at one of the stately Archduchesses—behind her back, it is true, but the incident did not go unnoticed. She dropped a bouquet that had been presented to her because the weight annoyed her. The Empress of Germany looked dismayed at the dismal failure. She had some idea of the Kaiser's plans, and was aware five minutes after the special train had pulled up on the platform that the project had fallen through. Wilhelm, who is not by any means sensitive, had not marked the by-play. The look on the

horrified face of the Empress should have warned him from committing a further error; but he was always quite oblivious to atmospheres. He turned round and, with a rough shoulder movement that was visible to everyone on the platform, he actually "shoved"—no other word can describe the movement—the Princess towards the young Archduke. The Princess, well used to her father's abrupt manners, smiled at the young Archduke, who rose to the occasion in a manner worthy of the traditions of his family, which is celebrated for its fine manners. But Kaiser Wilhelm's matrimonial plans had failed before they were really made. All the women were against it. The Habsburgs objected to the presence of a Protestant in their midst even though she might forsake her religion. They knew that anything so foreign to themselves could never preside at the Court of Vienna. Their opinion was shared by their guest, who hated the gloomy Hofburg, and cared but little for Schönbrunn, where the strict etiquette rendered the mother of the future heir to the throne a mere puppet in the hands of attendants, who would not even allow her to educate or control the destinies of her children. Princess Louise put a final seal upon any possibility of negotiations being renewed by her

very decided conduct during the subsequent proceedings. Vienna was full of stories of the strong-mindedness of the Kaiser's only daughter. It had had experience of strong-minded Princesses in the past. It wished for nothing more of the same kind. Kaiser Wilhelm had lost.

Baulked in his matrimonial schemes, he now turned to the political situation. Emperor Francis Joseph was irritable. The visit, although on a much smaller scale than had been originally planned, cost him much money, and, though he had been extremely generous in his youth, the Emperor had become strangely parsimonious in his old age. He grudged the great expense that was invariably entailed by the Kaiser's State visits. The programme usually included some expensive outing. Sometimes five miles of road had to be improved up to the royal automobile standard. At another time Wilhelm would take a fancy to go shooting after his stay in Vienna, and could not be induced to accept the simple life that was the joy of the Emperor of Austria when among the peasants. The hunting-box, the whole forest, had to be brought up to the standard of an American millionaire. The Habsburgs, whose claim to rank was too ancient

and too secure to need any artificial pomp to keep it up, rode through the deep forests on small, hardy ponies. The Emperor of Germany required a road, and insisted upon its being cut right through the forest. He was never secure of his position. Beyond all these minor inconveniences he expected to be treated with the utmost ceremony, and considered that it was incumbent upon the frail old monarch in Schönbrunn to fetch him at the railway station, to take him to his rooms along the chilly corridors of Schönbrunn Palace, and to expose himself, in season and out of season, in order to magnify the importance of his guest. It was further reported in Vienna that Kaiser Wilhelm, ever penurious, had come to borrow money from the aged Emperor—one of the richest sovereigns in Europe, if, indeed, not the richest of all. All these things did not endear Emperor Wilhelm to the Viennese. They showed their feelings by refusing to get out the best bunting and by cheering their Emperor frantically when alone, and pointedly refraining from any exhibition of enthusiasm when the visitors passed. The people, too, perhaps, had a true perception of what Kaiser Wilhelm sought, and recognised that he was really patronising the old Emperor, suggesting

that it was time he took a back seat in a dozen insidious ways. Kaiser Wilhelm hoped Archduke Francis Ferdinand would be easy to manage, but was not convinced of this. Emperor Francis Joseph watched the growing intimacy between his heir and the Kaiser with great misgivings. He knew that toils were being wound round the Archduke, who believed that he could accept obligations and not be called upon to pay for them. The aged diplomatist at his side knew better. The experience of three-quarters of a century had taught him the true inwardness of things. It was vain, however, to utter warnings. He was not even discreet. When in a fit of rage—such as attacks all the Habsburgs who are epileptic—nothing was sacred. A man who was not able to control himself could not be trusted with secrets that might imperil Austria's relations with Germany. Thus things drifted. Germany obtained increasing power in Austrian councils; the only man who could lay a restraining hand upon his heir was old and weary and unwilling for anything that spelt change or unrest.

CHAPTER VIII

AFFAIRS IN TURKEY

It was clear to everyone who followed the course of events in the Near East that the dissolution of the Turkish Empire was at hand. The race towards ruin, that had gone on slowly before the introduction of the telegraph and telephone, now began to suit its pace to the times. Corruption of every kind was the order of the day in Turkey. Nothing could be obtained without bribery. Every kind of enterprise was stopped by the extortions of the tax-gatherer. Any man who was known to possess ready money was plundered by corrupt officials. The system of land-tenure prevented the peasants from putting any money into improvements. The great mineral wealth in Turkey and the subject lands could not be touched, for the law said that only the surface of the land belonged to the proprietor; all mining rights remained the property of the State. Mining

engineers who came to search for hidden wealth were murdered by the peasants, who feared that the Government would confiscate their land.* Men who went down to Turkey to do business always spoke of the necessity of adopting quite other methods than elsewhere. Money, even in the case of respectable firms, was not kept in the bank; where it would fetch interest, but distributed among a number of more or less distant relatives. Thus the stranger had no means of discovering whether his customer could pay or could not pay. The latter always had a clear case for the Courts, and could prove absolute penury whether the necessity arose in connection with taxation or with a tiresome customer. At the same time all business there was done on the credit system. The European agent, therefore, never dealt direct, but depended upon the local agent, who had a profound and up-to-date knowledge of his customer's financial standing. The fact that no man could be forced to pay made tradesmen very honest, and the Turk, even before the revolution, had an excellent reputation for uprightness throughout South-Eastern Europe. "The Turk is a gentleman; he always pays," they said in Austria and in Hungary. Just as large transactions were carried out in the latter

countries without the interposition of any legal man, and sums running into thousands passed from hand to hand in small notes to avoid the heavy stamp duty, so the Turk transacted business without documents, always keeping to his word. The Austrian and German agent who overran Turkey and dumped his least marketable goods upon the people, felt he was dealing with a kindred soul, but, to avoid all risks, he fixed his prices to allow for long waiting, and also to cover any unavoidable bad debts. He had a serious competitor in business in the Balkans, and was gradually being routed from his long-established haunts by the Italian "drummer." The Bohemian textile manufacturers had been accustomed to regard Turkey and the Balkans as a kind of dumping-ground for bales of goods that had not "taken" colour properly and for wares that showed some deficiency. The arrival of cases of excellent wares from Milan at about two-thirds of the price of the Austrian article naturally damaged their market very considerably. It is certain that much of the friction between Austria-Hungary and Italy was due to the growing keenness of competition in trade upon the Balkans, and just at this period it was getting very active.

Turkey hung thus, like an over-ripe pear, the wasps swarming around her, her Sultan Abdul Hamid committing crimes that cried to heaven, when the news reached Vienna that the Third Army Corps at Salonica was marching upon Constantinople. The revolution and the deposition of Abdul Hamid were accomplished with a celerity that gave rise to the suspicion that Austria knew more of the whole affair than she chose to admit. The Austrian Government made desperate efforts to keep the news from getting out until everything was accomplished, and it is more than probable that the Young Turks were financed by the Austrian Government. It is equally certain, however, that the Young Turks chose a moment that suited themselves, and had not consulted Austria as to details such as dates. Austria had set a vast machine in motion, and could only stand aghast at the completeness of the success of the rebels. It was not what she intended. With the opening of a Turkish Parliament many questions that might have drifted indefinitely became pressing. The chief of these was the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Austria-Hungary had occupied these lands. For many years she had carried on a rule that was not pleasing to the population, formed almost exclusively of

Serbo-Croats, who wished to join their Servian neighbours across the frontier. With what the Austro-Hungarian administrators regarded as singular blindness, they felt that they would prefer the very progressive rule of King Peter to the retrogressive government of subject-nations by the Central Power. The few Mohammedan Albanians in Bosnia were content with the existing state of affairs, which differed little from that under Turkish rule. As they were merely 3 per cent. of the population, however, they were of minor importance, although men of prominent position in most cases.

The establishment of the Turkish Constitution changed the whole aspect of affairs as regards Bosnia and Herzegowina. The countries, although occupied by Austria-Hungary, were still under the suzerainty of Turkey. They would have the right to send deputies to represent them at the new Turkish National Assembly. If this were permitted, Austria felt that it would be only a question of time before she was called upon to evacuate the annexed lands. Turkey might become regenerate. She would then exercise the leading *rôle* in the Balkans that Austria had reserved for herself.

Austria-Hungary decided that it was the

moment for action. Only one course was open to her. She must proclaim the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegowina. Kaiser Wilhelm was consulted upon the advisability of this step. He said that the step must be taken without warning. It must come upon Europe as a surprise. Other countries had proclaimed annexations—why not Austria-Hungary?

Archduke Francis Ferdinand bitterly disapproved of Austria's attention being turned to the East instead of to Italy. His influence was at a very low ebb at this particular time. Emperor Francis Joseph had regained his health. It was even thought that the robust old man might outlive the heir to the throne.

CHAPTER IX

THE ANNEXATION

THE proclamation of the Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegowina in 1908, with the evacuation of the Sanjak as a compensation to Turkey, took Europe by surprise. The general feeling was one of utter astonishment, that Austria-Hungary, herself far along the road to bankruptcy, should presume to annex anything. It is doubtful whether any one realised that Germany stood firm behind her in her high-handed action. Even if this were known vaguely, no one was aware that Germany had been consulted, had fathered the plan, and perhaps even conceived it in all its naked unscrupulousness. When the spasm of astonishment was over there was a loud outcry. Austria-Hungary had "torn up" the Treaty of Berlin in violating Article 29. An army, that was ready for the eventualities that the country shrewdly sus-

pected might ensue, was hastily thrown upon the Bosnian frontier, another was pushed up towards Russia. Germany also despatched a large force to the Russian front. The country resounded with the noise and confusion of a mobilisation, for, strange to say, Austria-Hungary, although aware her troops would be required, had made no definite preparations. Stories of Bohemian regiments, driven into troop trains covered by their officers' revolvers, ran like wildfire through the country. Further reports soon proved that the mobilisation was simply organised confusion. Germany heard and marked. There could be no war under such conditions. Meanwhile, the Austro-Hungarian mobilisation was followed by rapid action on the other frontiers. Russia put troops on her frontiers. Servia, feeling concerned for her safety, increased her frontier forces. Count Aehrenthal, besides promising to evacuate the Sanjak, undertook to compensate Turkey financially for the loss of her provinces. In all these arrangements it must be noted that Turkey was never consulted. She had to look on while her territory was taken away, powerless to defend her interests. This was a matter of quite secondary interest to the Great Powers, who simply demanded to know what were the inten-

tions of Austria-Hungary.) The winter of 1908-09 was spent in negotiation. The soldiers, carefully provided with winter clothing, spent the months on the chilly frontiers, and pitiful letters of complaint of the severity of the Galician and Servian climates reached Vienna. (These were from the common soldiers, whose lot has always been a hard one.) They were subjected to the severe discipline that prevails in the Prussian army, but whereas the Prussian gets his full allowance of food-stuff and has the proper clothing for the climate at the end of October, the Austrian trooper is, as often as not, supplied with ice-making machines in December and woollen sleeping-sacks in July. New needs that cropped up at the front were only met long after the cold that made them indispensable had changed to spring-like warmth and the armies felt the inconveniences of an inefficient officialdom very severely.

The young officers at the front, who were well provided with money, spent a healthy winter. Ski-ing was one of the chief amusements; they brought the sport back to Vienna, where it had previously been something of a novelty. Otherwise the social life of the people was but little affected by the diplomatic trouble that was

causing such perturbation at the Ballplatz. There was some complaining at the scarcity of men. Vienna hostesses had always counted on providing each girl with a choice of partners; this year the available men were either getting on in life or unduly young, as the mobilisation had swept up the rest. Those who remained at home, too, were overworked, and could not spend their days in semi-somnolence in the office and their nights in the whirling activity of the ball-room. It was only a year later, on returning from the annual holiday, that people began to notice that prices had gone up. The explanation was simple enough. The army, after the unsuccessful mobilisation which had revealed all kinds of deficiencies, began to make numerous demands. The guns they had tested during the very frequent frontier skirmishes whose history has never been written were useless. Much of the ammunition was counterfeit. Stories of corruption touching even the highest officials were current. Some great personages were dismissed without the customary decoration, the Emperor plainly saying that he would show no mercy to those who had betrayed their country. The excuse that they had no idea that a war was perhaps pending did not palliate their crime in the eyes of the aged

Emperor, who is a soldier *par excellence* in all that concerns discipline and order.

The discovery of many lacunae and "discrepancies" in the service made Austria-Hungary herself chary of going to war. When the chance of a compromise came she was ready to take it. This was the easier for her, as Germany, who was prepared for a world-war in the month of October, absolutely refused to back Austria-Hungary in an adventurous policy in December. The reason was plain. Germany and her Emperor had believed all the reports they had received of Austria's readiness; it was only when they saw how the mobilisation hung fire, and realised how unwilling her men—especially those belonging to the subject races—were to fight, that they saw they had been deceived, not intentionally, but by the difference between what the Austrians believed and the actual state of affairs. Kaiser Wilhelm began to see for the first time that he could not take the Emperor's word for things; not that the aged man had the faintest intent to deceive him, but simply that he lived in a world created by his courtiers, and existed in the atmosphere prevalent at Courts a century ago. His councillors, old men like himself, never told the Emperor anything unpleasant. If they believed that he

did not wish to hear it, the truth was carefully concealed. It is doubtful whether the Emperor ever knew of the discontent in the ranks of the army.

Kaiser Wilhelm had but small difficulty in holding back the politicians who sat in Vienna and appreciated his arguments. Modern wars, said the Kaiser, cannot be waged without munitions and money. Austria-Hungary had numbers of men, but her munitions were of ancient pattern; her guns were not fit for active service. Wealth she possessed in plenty, as Austria-Hungary is a rich country, but it was not realised. It was all invested in lands, machinery, and other plant. Her subjects were not accustomed to direct taxation to any extent. The military party could not grasp these arguments.

A great nation ought not to stoop to negotiate, it said. Why should they hesitate when their army was over two millions strong?

It is a curious fact that during the negotiations no one mentioned the really salient point in so many words, nor asked, "By what right had Germany, through Austria, arrogated to herself the power to disturb the peace of Europe and to steal a march upon her neighbours in the night?" Neither country has ever advanced a

reason to excuse this action. The first cause was doubtless Kaiser Wilhelm. In the plenitude of his arrogance, which made him consider himself beyond all human laws, he regarded the rights and wishes of others as entirely negligible quantities where the greatness of the German Empire, which meant his greatness, was concerned. Every German child was taught that Germany should be supreme over all. In the schools they learnt that nothing, not even truth or justice, could be allowed to interfere with Germany's commercial progress. The young men who stole into Italy or Bohemia as clerks and took copies of the names of customers for the use of their countrymen, were not considered thieves in the usual sense. They were simply German patriots; men who had been reared from childhood to consider that the old standards had fallen, and a new German philosophy had taken its place. This teaching had one object, and one only, the aggrandisement of Germany. Kaiser Wilhelm was at the head of this movement. He regarded the other nations as effete and degenerate. They had no right to block the way of the Prussians, who were a reincarnation of the Goths of old, and who would sweep everything before them. Prussians of high standing were not backward in expounding this theory.

The other German races murmured at the "unscrupulousness" of the Prussian. They felt that men of this character were dangerous, and that they ought not to be entrusted with the supreme command in the Empire. Austria-Hungary, meanwhile, chafed at the bit that she was beginning to feel. After all the delicate questions had been settled and the terms of the agreement arranged, her statesmen sighed and said: "This has been a mistake, we ought to have gone to war."

Statesmen saw that they had placed themselves too unreservedly in Germany's hands. Peace, too, had been preserved by unusual means. When things had reached a very critical stage, the aged Emperor Francis Joseph stemmed the current that was carrying the country towards war. He let it be known that he objected to the peace being broken. He wished to end his days in tranquillity. Such respect was felt for the Emperor that this was sufficient to turn the scale in favour of peace. Austrian statesmen, however, were encouraged in an irresponsible feeling that they might go to great lengths in threatening war without being called upon to back up their threats by action. The Austro-Hungarian supreme War Lord could save the situation by a word. Germany

could prevent things reaching a climax if the Emperor's petition for peace were not sufficient.

These ideas were radically wrong. The Emperor tacitly undertook not to break the peace again when he made his appeal. It is certain that he never intended to do so. But this should have hampered his statesmen. It did not. Instead of feeling that the Emperor's pledge to Europe laid a responsibility upon them, they, on the contrary, felt that their acts were always liable to be disavowed by the monarch, and that they were not forced to show the same caution as they would if their decisions were final. In the same way, they failed to realise that Germany would inevitably demand compensation for her protection. The noblemen who held the helm in Vienna were not a match for the calculating business men who were pursuing a "real" policy at Berlin, and who had little to do with ideals.

CHAPTER X

PRINCE EGON FÜRSTENBERG AND COUNT TCHIRSKY.
HOW THE KAISER "WORKED" VIENNA

KAISER WILHELM had the good sense to keep away from Vienna during the time of the annexation crisis. Very few knew the extent of his influence in the Austrian capital, nor had they any idea how it was exercised. The Kaiser was always well informed of everything that was happening in Austria, and obtained his knowledge by attaching personages like Max Egon Fürstenberg to his person. The Kaiser never selected a friend except for the advancement of his own ends. Prince Max, who had the position of a reigning sovereign, without the work or responsibilities that were formerly attached to the title and possessions, had the *entrée* to all the most exclusive houses in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Here he shared State secrets that it was given only to very few to know.

Kaiser Wilhelm was quick to see the advantage of attaching such a man to his side. The Prince was flattered by the monarch's notice, and never thought that casual remarks that he let fall were treasured up by his Royal host. The German Kaiser and the Prince even speculated in stocks and shares together, financed companies, and indulged in business that was quite legitimate for the wealthy Prince, who could afford to lose heavily, (but very dangerous for a monarch whose purse was always exhausted.)

Prince Max, who is easy-going and good-humoured, cared little for his failures, but Kaiser Wilhelm lost prestige with his people through his financial transactions. Prince Max was very irresponsible in many ways. Like many other Austrians, he failed to see that his country was on the edge of a volcano. Things had always settled themselves before, and they would again, he thought. It is doubtful whether he realised that he was a mere tool in the hands of the Kaiser, and even if he did so, his sardonic contempt of life made him indifferent to the unpatriotic *rôle* that he was playing in giving away his country's secrets to her worst enemy. Intelligent and well-versed in the traditions of his family that has produced so many famous men, it is probable that Prince Max could have saved

Austria from falling into the hands of the Germans had he realised what was happening. Unfortunately, he was too much occupied in pursuing the latest craze of the moment to think of serious matters. Under his charming manners he possessed a certain acumen, but was inclined to think the Germans were guided by the same motives as he was himself. The over-civilised, over-polished man of the world fell an easy prey to the cold, calculating monarch on the other side of the frontier.

Prince Max Egon Fürstenberg was one type of the Kaiser's familiars. Count Tchirsky, the German Ambassador at Vienna, was the prototype of the others. The German Ambassador in Vienna was the *doyen* of the Diplomatic Corps. Cold-blooded, calculating, deep, he was the very embodiment of the Kaiser's ideal politician. Tchirsky did not know what scruples meant, and his many years' experience of the Court of Vienna enabled him to put his fingers upon every weakness there. He saw only the defects and missed much that was fine in the character of the men with whom he had to deal. They spoke of him as the "Old Spider" of the Metternichgasse, where he had his palace. He did not play a leading *rôle* in society; visitors to Vienna knew but little about him, if indeed they



PRINCE MAX EGON FÜRSTENBERG.

realised his existence at all. He carried on a bitter warfare against the members of the diplomatic body who tried to oppose the Triple Alliance. His machinations were less openly, but none the less fiercely, directed against Italy, the nominal, but unwilling, ally of the Central Empires. Tchirsky, a man of dark plots, contrived to acquire interest in one of the leading Vienna papers. This interest developed into the effective control of the organ. He was able, thus, under the guise of a newspaper attack, to render Vienna almost intolerable for any diplomatist whose presence he considered detrimental to the welfare of Germany. When the Emperor "conspicuously turned his back upon the Russian military attaché" at a Court ball, the fact was recorded with great gusto in Tchirsky's paper. The attaché, who was compromised in a spy case, would have left Vienna by the first train on the morrow in any case. Emperor Francis Joseph was a soldier and no courtier, and when he turned his back upon a foreigner there was no mistaking the action. It was done squarely and openly. The record of the German-owned Press did not improve the strained relations between Russia and Austria-Hungary, for the fact that Germany directed the paper's policy was an open secret.

A pro-English American Ambassador was subjected to attacks of a kind that could only be conceived by the fertile brain of Count Tchirsky.* The Ambassador was accused of being parsimonious, and his personal habits were described with an acrimony that showed he had a powerful enemy. The coarseness of the language used, too, exposed the source; only a Prussian could employ such machinations against an enemy. How the Austrians, who prided themselves on their hospitality and their courtesy to strangers, could allow such an attack to appear can only be explained by the growing helplessness of their statesmen when confronted by the powerful German. Tchirsky further distinguished himself by making an attack through the Press upon the wife of the British Ambassador. How far he was responsible for the famous Cartwright interview it is difficult to say. The blow, it was known at the time, came from Germany. Austrians might have listened to a private conversation at a table in Marienbad, and put the words uttered by various members of the British Colony into shape as their views upon the Morocco question, but it needed the unscrupulousness of a German to conceive the plan of putting the pronouncements into the mouth of the British Ambassador. The latter

was too astonished by the impertinence of the act to realise what it meant. Indeed, it is possible that the Ambassador's indignant denials of ever having entered into any discussion with the man who claimed to have obtained the interview were suppressed like many other items of news and facts. The only denial that did appear was late and inadequate. The British, bound by traditions, never even suspected that German diplomacy could resort to such means for gaining an advantage. No one realised their absolute deadness to all sense of morality. When Count Tchirsky did sally forth from his chilly palace in Vienna, it was to compass the undoing of the frivolous Austrians. He would exact the payment of a pledge, given over wine. Bargains, made in the ball-room, were reduced next morning to writing, then stored away among the archives at Berlin, and the carrying out of the conditions—conditions favourable to Germany and disastrous to Austria—would be exacted with the cruelty and callousness of a Prussian politician. Had Tchirsky himself hung back, there were others to egg him on. The ideal condition of a Europe in which Germany was supreme must be realised. Any remnants of conscience that Tchirsky might have possessed had long

been stifled by intercourse with his Imperial master, who regarded himself as far above all moral law. He was the supreme War Lord. His word had established a new morality quite different from that generally accepted. The military training enjoyed by almost all Germans made them the more ready to accept this point of view. Discipline, enforced until the power of independent reflection has been lost through want of use, relieved them of the necessity of considering the morality of their acts. The hymns of praise of Germany's successful policy, sung by philosophers and by the pastors of religion, who were foremost, as usual, in advocating the policy of expediency that Germany might be exalted, lulled any scruples felt by Tchirsky's subordinates. He, himself a survival of a former age, was incapable of imagining anything of the kind. Truth was what the supreme lord decreed to be truth. Honesty was merely another word for expediency. The Ambassador was surrounded by a number of men, with no reputation to lose, who brought him news of every fresh turn of events in Austria-Hungary. They cared little that they were betraying their country to a hard taskmaster. The present benefits of a flourishing banking

account were ample compensation for their treachery. These causes all combined to render Tchirsky the least popular man in Vienna. When his name was mentioned, every tongue was suddenly frozen into silence. Was the inquirer a spy? Did he wish to sound the secret feelings of someone present? The Viennese felt a distrust that was rather instinctive than realised. It was the premonition of the closing of the brutal hand of German power upon the crowd of gay butterflies on the banks of the Danube.

CHAPTER XI

THE "GREAT SERVIA" IDEA—SERVIAN ORGANISATION

WHILE Austria-Hungary, with Germany behind her, was discussing the tearing up of the Treaty of Berlin with the rest of Europe, both Powers failed to observe developments that were taking place under their very eyes. The Austro-Hungarian official sent off to Bosnia or Croatia cared very little about the people entrusted to him. His one and only idea was to scheme and plan until he obtained his move to Vienna. He took no means to detect and watch the conspiracies against the Government that were being constantly hatched in the cafés of the town where he lived. In a fit of sudden and uncalled-for energy, he would make a search for cups and saucers decorated with the Serb colours or vindictively punish the parents of a small child for permitting her to wear a Serb

sash round her waist, instead of a simple piece of ribbon. This unexpected activity naturally raised the wrath of the Serbo-Croats, the more so because really seditious acts frequently escaped notice, or, if the administrators knew about them, they avoided taking cognisance of them, as it meant the opening up of large questions and much trouble with the central authorities in Vienna. Thus the Serbs, who lived under Austrian or Hungarian rule, were often permitted to go to great lengths without any interference. The sudden swoops of an enraged magistrate, who took action rather because the plotters had interfered with his personal convenience than because it was really incumbent upon him to do so, produced a feeling of insecurity among the subject races. They regarded the local governor somewhat in the light of a dangerous but slumbering beast, and they prayed that his slumber might continue undisturbed. Some, however, went the length of trying to twist his tail, when they knew that he had been sent to the provinces in disgrace, as was generally the case. If a man had been exiled for more serious offences than uncouthness of manner, or a failure to respond to the friendly advances of the chief's elderly wife, and her invitation to shine at her somewhat monotonous

afternoon teas, the Serbs, who were always well-posted in the reasons that led to an official being sent to the provinces, felt that he was not in a position to injure them without damaging himself, and behaved accordingly. The eight million Young Slavs, as they call themselves, under the dominion of Austria or of Hungary have always been well organised. When one of their number arrives at either Vienna or Budapesth he calls round at his Union. Although he may not know a single word of German or Hungarian, the society find him a job. Accustomed to heavy labour, the Serb or Croat is much sought after, especially in the lower ranks of service. Time goes by, the man-servant or maid-servant has learnt the language and is firmly established in the household. There is trouble in the home because of the failure of a German tailor to keep his word. The Slav servant has a relative who is willing to undertake the job, although it is nearly midnight. He is hastily fetched, and by the advice of his friend within the camp fixes his charges a trifle below those asked by the German. He remains master of the situation, the German being ousted. Gradually the household needs are supplied by Slavs, who carry out orders promptly and carefully, and have none of the supercilious "take it or leave it" manner

of the German purveyor. The Austrians always say "Let one Slav into the house, and they rule the ingoings and outgoings for the future."

The Slav is always an enigma, which years of close intercourse cannot solve. His aspirations, his outlook on life are a sealed book to the West European. The all-pervading and very distinct impression which remains is that the Slavs have very distinct national aims, which they are prepared to pursue with an utter persistence and ruthlessness, of which no other peoples are capable.

Just at this period the Young Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian realm were making a determined effort for liberation. They felt, and felt justly, that they were oppressed. They thirsted for education and paid large taxes to secure that same education in order to enable their children to take their places as equals with the dominant races. Austria and Hungary both dreaded the rise of the Slavs, and restricted their education as much as possible, devoting the funds voted for the purpose to other objects.

Things were so bad in this respect that a commission was sent over from the States to ascertain how it could be possible at this date in the civilisation of the world that such a large proportion of emigrants to America should be

illiterate. In some provinces it appeared from the Government statistics that 69 per cent. of the annual recruits could neither write nor read. The lack of education was most felt among the Serbs, Croats, Poles and Little Russians. The Slavs, who possess an uncommon amount of common-sense, felt that this withholding of education was immoral, and that it served some deep ulterior purpose. The Bohemians, who inhabited a rich manufacturing district, by force of much agitation, were able to enforce their demands for education. The Poles were miserably neglected, their representatives who attended the Vienna Parliament were fêted and made much of, and, aristocrats themselves for the most part, they were easily persuaded to forget the wrongs of their people at home. In the Bukowina the people were on a low level, and hardly realised their position. In Croatia, Dalmatia, and especially in Bosnia, things were different. Italy was close by, and the Slavs learnt how things were managed in that very progressive and modern State. Servia and Montenegro were governed on lines that contented the peoples there, and the Serbs across the frontier felt that they would be better under the rule of King Peter than subject to a governor who was so far from the centre that he could practically deal

with them as he pleased. It was seldom that the governor really understood the vernacular. Being entirely German in his sympathies, he naturally felt no interest in the Slav aspirations, except a desire to crush them. While Vienna was using up her strength in arguing with Europe, the Slavs considered that their opportunity had come for the establishment of a vast Slav Empire, consisting of all the countries inhabited by Slavs in Southern Austria and Hungary, which was to be placed under the rule of the King of Servia.

Negotiations for a union between Montenegro and Servia, for the establishment of a common customs tariff, a common army, and for the pursuance of a common foreign policy, were being carried on. Servia hoped to extend her territory to the sea. Whether she thought to incorporate the Slavs of Austria and Hungary among her people is difficult to say, but she, like the rest of South-Eastern Europe, was aware that Austria-Hungary was rotten to the core. It must in the near future follow Turkey and share its fate. As events move much more quickly to-day in the epoch of telegrams and railways than they did in the period of coaches and couriers, a much more rapid dissolution of the Empire was to be expected than in the case

of Turkey that had been tottering for centuries. While the Austrian and Hungarian Slavs were looking to King Peter to deliver them from Austrian and Hungarian tyranny, Austria was intriguing, and encouraging the Serbs in Servia to rebel. She had as little success with the Serbs as with the Italians across the Italian frontier, as both peoples are ardently patriotic, and even the poorest scorned Austrian gold. The determination of the Young Slavs to live under the rule of a monarch of their own race became strengthened at every fresh proof of the effeteness of Austro-Hungarian rule. Themselves strong and virile, they felt that they required administrators who could deal with the problems that came to them for settlement in the rough-and-ready manner peculiar to the other side of the border; they had always completely misunderstood the shelving of petitions, the cumbersome multiplication of documents, peculiar to Austro-Hungarian officialdom. Rapid justice, even if less correct in the matter of form, was preferable, they felt, to the long and unprofitable dilatoriness of the proceedings under an administration more especially careless in dealings with things that concerned people living far from the capital.

Austria-Hungary heard but little of the grow-

ing discontent in her outlying provinces. Assassinations and attempts on the lives of administrators multiplied, but the rulers in Vienna, busy with things nearer home, simply suggested "that a heavier weight should be placed upon the safety-valve." After an outrage some few ringleaders were hanged, half a dozen newspapers suppressed, and then the incident was put away with other events of grave portent, signs of the times which, however, were not allowed to disturb the gaiety of the capital.

CHAPTER XII

ALBANIA AND MACEDONIA

IT is difficult to understand the complete indifference with which the growth of the Great Servian idea was regarded in Vienna. Eight million Serbo-Croats under Austro-Hungarian rule were eager to join forces with their brothers across the frontier, five million Serbs and Montenegrins. Whether the indifference manifested at Vienna was owing to the attitude of supercilious contempt of what was going on around them which was generally adopted by Austro-German officials, or whether they were really ignorant of the extent of the movement, it is difficult to say. It is possible that politicians, who did reflect upon the very evident increase of disaffection in the South, merely regarded it as an indication that the small Germano-Austrian and Magyar minorities must throw in their lot with Germany. Certainly the relative numbers of Germans and Czechs, of Maygars

and Serbs were most alarming. Officials in high places naturally judged the position more accurately than could the man in the street, because the published statistics giving their relative numbers of Germano-Austrians and Czechs, of Serbo-Croats and Magyars, were always manipulated to such an extent that they were quite useless for scientific purposes. Another set of correct figures was kept for the purposes of administration. With an insolent disregard of her complete lack of success in ruling the Serbo-Croats, Austria-Hungary not only added more millions to her realm by annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina, but she now embarked on new schemes of annexation and colonisation.

New Turkey had less vitality than the old ruin that had just crumbled to pieces. The Young Turks, when asked why they had not seized their opportunity of securing the benefits they so much desired, which had been within their grasp, said sadly that appearances were deceptive. There had never been a chance of regeneration for the country. The same power which had promoted the revolution had corrupted the new Parliament—German money. Austrian interference had rendered them mere puppets in the hands of unscrupulous Germans. They had not realised this until too late. They

had merely delivered their country over to a worse foe than Abdul Hamid, who, whatever his vices and faults might have been, acted in his own interests and in the interests of Turkey. Germany had encouraged the revolution merely to precipitate the final ruin of Turkey. She now thought that the moment for dissolution could not be postponed. Austria, acting for her, proclaimed the fact of Turkey's disintegration upon the housetops, and suggested that Albania and Macedonia should be made autonomous. The proposal sounded fair and just. Everyone knew that the Macedonians had been fighting for liberty for centuries. The claims of Albania were not so clear. Those who lived close to the Balkans understood what the news of outrages and massacres was worth. Outrages and massacres were certainly common enough in both Macedonia and Albania, but news from the Balkans never penetrates to Mid-Europe, unless it is to the advantage of some Great Power that it should do so. Indeed, events of great importance happened in the outlying provinces of Austria-Hungary without the rest of Europe knowing anything about them. Rebellious Poles were shot down in hundreds by dragoons in broad daylight. Even in Vienna and Budapesth the soldiers dealt with the crowd in the

most brutal manner, killing and wounding unarmed citizens. Official telegrams would report riots, mentioning a small number of injured and one killed. Thus it may be understood that news from the Balkans, especially when it dealt with outrages, was always political in its aim, and always biassed. Just at this time Albanian massacres began to be very frequent. Now persons acquainted with Albanians will always be very sceptical as to these same massacres. The Mohammedan Albanian, a member of the predominant race in the country, is very frequently a highly polished gentleman. He speaks French very fluently of the variety spoken at Constantinople and throughout the Balkans. Few Europeans can beat him in accuracy; none come anywhere near him in fluency, the result of much practice. He can neither read nor write, but having been partially educated at Constantinople, he possesses great culture. Underneath is the wild man of the highlands, who carries on blood feuds with the neighbouring tribes, and never hesitates to slay a Turkish tax-gatherer at sight. "Turkey," say the Serbs, "tried to tax the Albanians for thousands of years; she has never succeeded in obtaining a single *para*; she commuted the taxation for soldiers, and all the finest Turkish

soldiers are really Albanians." This was literally true. Practically all the handsome Turkish guards are Albanians, and they have won Turkey her reputation for producing splendid soldiers. The Albanian, too, is an excellent merchant; he can only be compared with the Italian for financial capacity. He naturally filled many of the important posts under Abdul Hamid. Albanians seldom marry into alien races. After twenty years spent in Constantinople, the Albanian returns home to settle upon his small farm, if he cannot establish himself upon the ancestral property. It is often a mere slip of barren land upon the hillside, where ploughing must be done by hand, because no horse or mule could keep a foothold on the steep slant. He purchases the property and founds a family. It is clear that a man of this disposition, with influence at Constantinople, would not allow his people to be massacred unavenged. If the cunning tax-gatherer dare not approach the mountains, even when guarded by a troop of Turkish soldiers, it is unlikely that the somewhat effete men who compose the real Turkish army would venture up country merely for the sake of massacring odd Albanians. The latter seldom congregate in cities, but are scattered far and wide throughout a roadless country. The

Turks sometimes sent large and well-equipped expeditions to Albania, to avenge the killing of a governor or some other important functionary who was misguided enough to venture into their midst. These expeditions burnt out villages and killed every inhabitant they could lay hands on in the approved Turkish fashion. But the result of such expeditions was not great. The Albanians, who have an excellent system of couriers, spread the news of any attempt against their liberties. The inhabitants took to the mountains and slaughtered a large proportion of the invading force from behind rocks, and from almost inaccessible fastnesses among the mountains. But such expeditions, owing to their cost in men and arms, were very rare. Owing to the jealousies of Turkey, Austria, and Italy, the Albanian never lacked weapons. One nation or the other was always ready to supply him with munitions to carry on his nefarious plans against the others.

The Christian Albanian is perhaps a trifle fiercer than his Mohammedan brother. He has not enjoyed the advantages of a long stay in Constantinople. He knows the Serb language, having learnt it from the wild mountain Serbs on the other side of the frontier. He is quite savage, like his neighbours. There is little to

choose between the Miridites and Malissores on the Albanian side of the border, and the Montenegrins and Serbs across the mountains. The Albanian, in some cases, however, has had a chance of improving his general education. He is an inveterate emigrant. There is a large standing colony of Albanians in the United States. In Boston alone there are many thousands. They are young men, almost exclusively, for the Albanian does not take his womenfolk with him, nor does he settle beyond the ocean. He simply goes abroad to make his fortune. He works without ceasing in the great factories of the States, he denies himself every kind of pleasure, and eats the commonest food, prepared in a large eating-house for members of his race, and saves continually. Existence, supported upon a handful of maize or macaroni, cannot be interesting, but he is willing to undergo the time of stress for the purpose of developing into a landed peasant-proprietor in his own land. He is then permitted to marry, and becomes the head of the family. His brothers who have tilled the land at home are denied the privilege of marriage until much later on in life, or maybe never reach a state of affluence that permits them to enter wedlock at all.

It gives a foreigner something of a shock to hear a handsome brigand fresh from his mountains speaking perfect Boston English, and using with the utmost assurance words that have been buried in oblivion since the time of Shakespeare.

Such is the Albanian of to-day. Reports of massacres carefully spread from the Central News Bureau, under German influence, at Salonica, were not accepted as facts in the south-eastern part of Europe. Italians, acquainted with the scene of action, reckoned up that if the reports issued in the Austrian papers were true, every Albanian must have been massacred on ten different occasions, besides being tortured and wounded times without number.

The interest shown by Austria-Hungary and Germany in the welfare of Albania was much deeper than that shown in Macedonia, because Albania commanded the Adriatic. Italy took an equally great interest in Albania, and to prevent any mistake about the final fate of the country, began colonising it, planting her traders all along the coast. There was a treaty between Austria and Italy, to the effect that neither country should make any move in regard to Albania without consulting the other.

Neither considered that the spirit of the agreement prevented the carrying on of intrigue. The Albanian, skilled in the diplomacy of the East, pitted one set of agents against another, and stored up rifles of the newest pattern for the carrying out of his private vendettas and the repulsing of any attempt to civilise him.

This was the condition of Albania when Austria-Hungary thought good to duplicate her annexation trick. She proclaimed the autonomy of Albania and Macedonia overnight, without consulting the other Powers. Her idea of autonomy was rule under a German prince, who would use his influence for his Fatherland. Austria meant to make another Bulgaria of Macedonia, and another Rumania of Albania. Italy protested against this arrangement. She objected to the ever-handy German princes being placed on thrones near the sea-coast. Servia and Montenegro, too, were afraid of German influence being extended in Albania, and did their best to foment trouble there. Servia had long regarded the route over Albania as her one chance of an outlet to the sea, and saw herself deprived of "her little window into the Adriatic" by the plan that would make Albania a sphere of Austro-German influence.

CHAPTER XIII

THE BALKAN WAR

GERMANY and Austria were considering how the Turkish Empire could be liquidated in a manner to secure the greatest advantage to themselves, and in their egoistical view somewhat neglected the other factors in the situation. Russia had great interests in the Balkans. Italy was looking towards the time when her surplus population could be sent there to colonise the rich lands that had been so neglected under the rule of the Turks. The third factor—which Germany and Austria did not think worth considering at all—was the Balkan peoples themselves. Under Russian protection, they had conceived a grand scheme. A Balkan League was formed. Bulgaria, Servia, Greece and Montenegro forgot all their disputes and became allies. Their Ministers drew a map of the Balkans, apportioning out

among themselves the provinces that then belonged to Turkey, the distribution being made according to the nationality of the peoples who inhabited each district. Each country, they considered, was to be ruled over by a king of its own nationality, if possible. All the Bulgars in Macedonia were to be united under the sceptre of King Ferdinand. The Kingdom of Servia was to stretch to the Adriatic, Albania was to be divided between Montenegro and Servia. Both countries would then have fine ports in the Adriatic. Greece was to extend her coastline considerably. She was to have those parts of Macedonia and of Albania that were inhabited by Greeks.

The Bulgarian people were the soul of this movement for liberation. King Ferdinand, who was always a German at heart, and who ruthlessly betrayed his adopted country to serve German interests, was probably dragged into the scheme by his enthusiastic people very much against his will. The Bulgars who lived in Austria and in Hungary boldly said that they had been preparing for the war against Turkey for forty years. "Every effort has been made by great and small for nearly half a century to throw off the Turkish yoke, and at last we shall do it," they said. And this in spite of the Ger-

manophile King. Bulgarian gardeners, who are employed all over Eastern Europe because of their extraordinary skill, came to Hungary, toiled through a lifetime, saving every possible penny of their earnings to return home with money for the war fund. Their hate of the Turks was intense. They wished to free their fellow Bulgars, who were oppressed by the Turkish tax-gatherers, and who had very little benefit in return for years of toil spent in cultivating tobacco-fields. While the Bulgars themselves were working for an ideal, Ferdinand and his Ministers wished to take possession of the rich tobacco-lands in Macedonia, which brought large revenues to the Turkish State. The Bulgars' great enthusiasm was only damped by a profound mistrust of their Prince. They knew that Ferdinand ranked as one of the best diplomats in Europe, and were proud to have so rich a man upon their throne. But they felt that in the difficult enterprise they were about to undertake a monarch with more honesty of purpose would have been fitter to deal with the situation.

Although the Balkan League was formed with the ostensible purpose of freeing Balkan lands from Turkish rule, the discontent in the Balkans was due to other causes. Montenegro

had no outlet to the sea that was suitable or big enough for her needs. If she had possessed Cattaro, one of the many excellent ports on the Hungarian coast, Servian goods could have been exported as well as Montenegrin products. It was Austria-Hungary who always opposed this. If she had allowed the Serbs to send their agricultural products to other parts of Europe beyond the Austro-Hungarian frontier all would have been well. There was a shortage of meat in Germany and Italy, as well as in Austria itself. But Austria, to please the Hungarian agrarians, interfered with all export trade into Austria or Germany, and thus made the Slavs on the Balkans determined to find an outlet to the sea.

The Balkan war was really the curtain-raiser to the Great War. The King of Montenegro was the first to begin. His troops were mobilised in twenty-four hours. The Balkan League had advised him that the war was about to begin, but it is more than possible that his very precipitate action hastened a war that was not perhaps inevitable. The news that Montenegro had mobilised was not taken seriously in Vienna. A story went the round of the cafés that it was all a put-up affair. Nikita, they said, had been engaged by Pathé Frères, he was to receive a

large sum of money for the films of a real mobilisation, and perhaps a miniature battle with the Turks thrown in. Very soon, however, it was seen that the Balkans were in deadly earnest. The Austrians, who knew something of the fighting qualities of the Turks, never doubted that they would have a complete walk-over. The Turks had money, they had arms. The Balkan peoples had none. Austria was perhaps not aware that Germany had supplied Bulgaria with large stores of guns and ammunition. The poor Balkan people had paid very dearly for the antique patterns, and been swindled most atrociously over the whole deal. The sights of the guns were wrong, and the Bulgarian gunners had had no instruction in their work.

Servia was supplied with French guns, and French gunners accompanied the consignments to their destination, and taught the Serbs how to manage the complicated weapons. Montenegro was well supplied with ammunition. Where did it come from? The wild mountain tribes, both in Montenegro and in Albania, were always supplied with the latest thing in rifles and full supplies of ammunition. They had been disarmed time and time again, but they merely surrendered ancient heirlooms, rifles

that served their grandfathers or great grandfathers. The good weapons were hidden in caves in the mountains, or buried until better times came, and they could carry them again.

The first Balkan war began, and the unexpected happened. Turkish troops were routed by the Bulgars, who fought with a courage and a determination that won them the respect of Europe. The Bulgars pushed on to Adrianople, but could not take it because the German guns were useless. The Bulgars raged against the Germans. Did the Germans simply look upon them as savages who could be supplied with inferior goods, or had they supplied the guns knowing that they would be used against the Turks? Neither Germany nor Austria wished the Turks to be defeated. They were pleased that the Balkan peoples should be weakened by fighting among themselves, but were very surprised and disappointed at the course taken by the war and the total defeat of Turkey.

After the war was over, the Balkan peoples began dividing up the spoils. Austria, with Germany behind her, interfered in the settlement. She would not allow Servia to have the territory she had conquered in Albania, or any outlet to the sea. Servia thereupon demanded

part of Macedonia, instead of the territory assigned her by the preliminary agreement. Ferdinand of Bulgaria was inclined to yield this, but Austria encouraged him to stand firm, promising to help him if he could not defeat that handful of savages, the Serbs. Russia, who had encouraged the formation of the Balkan League, saw that if the States began fighting among themselves, they would lose all their gains, and publicly advised the Balkan kings to refrain from fighting and to be satisfied with the land they had conquered. The States had enlarged their borders considerably; it would take years to consolidate them. Russia counselled them to attend to that business first, and then think of further conquests. This counsel did not please Bulgaria. King Ferdinand wired to Vienna for advice. Austria-Hungary and Germany saw their chance. The Balkan peoples were disunited. They must be encouraged to fight among themselves. Austria, acting without Germany, despatched a two-thousand word telegram to Ferdinand of Bulgaria. It promised an attack upon Servia from behind, while she was engaged with Bulgaria in front. The preparations made just before an army is mobilised were hastily put through. Men were warned for active service, and every

preparation made for starting a Balkan campaign. When everything was ready Austria-Hungary notified her allies. It was soon apparent that they refused to join in the campaign, or even to stand by their ally.

Italy—as was discovered long after—said that the Triple Alliance was defensive, and not offensive. She not only refused to aid Austria, but would not promise to remain neutral during the expedition. Germany, seeing that an Austrian expedition to the Balkans meant trouble with Italy, persuaded Austria to back out of her promise. Germany was not sorry that Austrian prestige should suffer. She did everything she could to discredit her ally in the Balkans.

When Bulgaria had been completely beaten by her despised neighbour, Serbia, Rumania fell upon her from behind and annexed a large piece of territory. Ferdinand's treachery to his allies had met with the deserved reward. The Kaiser had no pity for him, and was not slow to point out that whoever relied upon Austria was deceived. Had Ferdinand applied to Berlin, instead of to Vienna, things would have gone differently.

Ferdinand, broken, aged, a politician who has lost his game, a King bereft of territory,

a soldier who had been defeated, fled from Sofia to Vienna. At last he was forced to leave even that refuge. If Austria-Hungary had meant to leave him to unravel the tangled skein she had encouraged him to weave, she should have told him so before, and not abandoned him in the darkest hour of his life. The Emperor felt the justice of the reproaches that Ferdinand made him. He wished to be rid of the troublesome monarch. The Vienna Press was let loose upon Ferdinand. Stories to his discredit were circulated everywhere. While his wife comforted the wounded, said the leading papers, he stayed in the capital because he was afraid to return. He spent his time in frivolity, joking with ballet girls behind the scenes, while his consort was purchasing artificial limbs for the maimed from the money that should have been devoted to her own personal uses. Ferdinand soon discovered that in Vienna, as elsewhere, nothing succeeds like success, and that failures are not wanted, either there or in other foreign countries. He crept back to his summer palace, had the guards doubled, and lived in fear and trembling. His throne was so shaken that it seemed very doubtful whether it would regain its equilibrium.

In disavowing Ferdinand Austria-Hungary lost her influence in the Balkans.

At this period Russia and Italy, the new Balkan Powers, were in the ascendant. Austria advised Ferdinand to wait his time, when Bulgaria would be able to take vengeance upon her neighbours, and reap the reward of her treachery. Ferdinand, thoroughly tired of promises, and bitterly regretting his treachery to his allies, which had brought him the reward he so richly deserved, thanked fate that his wife and sons were popular in the country, and that he could leave for his Hungarian estates. He was sure that they could look after the interests of the dynasty much better during his absence than when he was there, only able to make lame explanations of his conduct in the past and his inexplicable quarrel with the other Balkan States.

CHAPTER XIV

KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA, THE VAINEST MAN IN EUROPE

KING FERDINAND was an interesting study as he crept away from Vienna, all his hopes bankrupt, his people's future compromised. The people there considered him almost one of themselves, for the Coburgs had always lived in Vienna. Prince Philip had a palace that commanded a fine view right across the Ringsstrasse. His brother Ferdinand lived there when he came to Vienna, and was thus able to come to and fro, *incognito*, whenever he pleased. The rest of Europe had no idea of the frequency of his visits to the capital. Perhaps it was only the theatre-managers who really were aware how often he was present in a capital where everyone was at liberty to come and go, unmolested by the crowd, unless he came as a monarch in state, when the Viennese were the first to acclaim one of their children "who had gone so far in the world," as they expressed it. The general feeling in the city was

that Ferdinand was a great artist in diplomacy, perhaps the greatest in Europe. In the capital of Austria he met many statesmen who came there—to the “very edge of civilisation,” as they put it—to confer upon the problems that then troubled Europe. Kaiser Wilhelm frequently rushed through to Vienna in his automobile, without warning, and took part in a short discussion of the situation, at which Ferdinand assisted on many occasions. Kaiser Wilhelm, with his usual astuteness, understood how to manage Ferdinand. He did not need money; that was a great relief to the Kaiser, who was invariably short of it himself. The Coburg family fortune was sufficient to provide for all his private wants on a liberal scale. There is not the slightest doubt that Ferdinand would have lost his throne long before had he been forced to ask his subjects for money to supply his personal needs. His independence in this respect placed him on a footing with the proudest monarchs in Europe. Kaiser Wilhelm, prodigal of things that cost him nothing, was able to lavish his gifts of wondering admiration upon the King of Bulgaria. He tactfully praised qualities that his friends imagined they possessed, and his delicate flattery of his best “democratic” manner, that seemed to say

there was no difference in rank at all between the king of a Balkan State and the Emperor of Germany, made Ferdinand a puppet in his hands. Wilhelm flattered him into seeing things with his eyes, and mesmerised the dazzled monarch, who had been a poor lieutenant, into thinking that he was really being taken into the confidence of German statesmen and allowed to read the secret thoughts of the great War Lord himself. The other Balkan sovereigns, who had a clearer idea of the reality of things, could not have been gulled so easily. They would have realised that there was a reason for this preference, shown only of recent years, for a man who commanded the route to Constantinople. Ferdinand, student of political history, a consummate diplomatist, was, nevertheless, blinded by the Kaiser, who appeared so simple—indeed, almost childlike—in his aims, and so far removed from the world of diplomatists to which Ferdinand belonged. This apparent simplicity of character, which has puzzled so many, is due to a warped mind. Kaiser Wilhelm has long considered that nothing mattered compared with the glorification of Germany. The Almighty he considered had entrusted him with the task of elevating the German nation. It was the

supreme people of the earth. It ought to be raised to a position which would make all other people subservient to it, and the humble instrument for this work was himself. He thus considered himself at liberty to break any law that stood in his way, and, being a firm believer in the creed that the end justifies the means, he was able to impress even people of great and unusual acumen with a sense of his probity. King Ferdinand would not trust the King of Montenegro, although Nikita was an open-handed, open-hearted old mountaineer. He was, however, quite willing to accept Kaiser Wilhelm's estimate of himself as a man with a single aim that must be accomplished at any cost. The King of Bulgaria prided himself upon being the "Little Czar" of the Balkans, and aped the great Russian Czar in many ways. He was naturally encouraged in this by Germany. His insatiate vanity prevented him from seeing that the delicate flattery poured into his ears by German diplomatists was merely dictated by self-interest. They wished to detach him from Austria and secure the allegiance of Bulgaria for Germany, to the detriment of Emperor Francis Joseph and his prestige among the Balkan peoples. Ferdinand would swallow any bait, walk into any trap, if an



KING FERDINAND OF BULGARIA.



KING NIKITA OF MONTENEGRO.

appeal to his vanity were made. Order after order was bestowed upon him; he received so many decorations that his uniform shone like a coat of mail with the small medals that are worn instead of the large originals. When he made his triumphal progress to Vienna for the first time in his new capacity as king, his tunic was one mass of sparkling Orders. The Viennese, who are accustomed to decorations on a wholesale scale, as they are conferred for very slight services in Austria-Hungary, and worn with great ostentation by all and sundry at the Court, said he glittered and sparkled like a dancing girl at a fair. They were quick to mark the point where the grandiose becomes ridiculous. They saw that a king so overloaded with Orders was absurd, not regal. "But, after all, for the Balkans—perhaps it impresses those savages down there at Sofia," and with a shrug of their shoulders they turned to look at his handsome sons, Slavonic in type, and without decorations; for Ferdinand never allowed his sons to play a leading *rôle* in any way. They were simple soldiers, who might mingle with the people and play the democrat while he acted the sovereign lord.

The sons made a much better impression upon the populace than the father. They

seemed to fit the frame into which they were born much better than the king who had been transported from living among the gayest and most cynical people in Europe to deal with the crude realities of the Balkans. Ferdinand had left his country repeatedly when the fear of assassination was too much for him. He has always been a coward. Even his soldierly training did not give him a grasp of what is expected of a man and a monarch. Like Kaiser Wilhelm, he always wore a mailed shirt or some other form of armour. Like Kaiser Wilhelm, he felt peculiarly safe in Vienna, as the police system is so perfect that any attempt upon the life of a monarch is almost impossible. They manage to keep a record of the business of every person who comes to the city. No suspects dare venture into the zone controlled by the Vienna police. The Austrian Emperor, as long as his health allowed, strolled about the city quite unconcerned for any danger. Kaiser Wilhelm found, too, that he could promenade unguarded, simply because the police had eliminated all chance of trouble. After the perils of Sofia Ferdinand enjoyed this feeling of complete security among the light-hearted Viennese. He would never have definitely broken with the Emperor of Austria, because

his favourite retreat would have been closed to him for ever. He had the feeling deep in his heart that he might be forced to abdicate at any moment. Then Austria would afford him shelter. There he could keep up his state, receive the respect and homage due to one who had been king and retain his *amour propre*.

It is probable that Ferdinand had but a low estimate of the intellectual attainments and the mental grasp of the Emperor of Austria himself. Like all the members of a younger generation who listened to the wisdom of Kaiser Wilhelm, he regarded him as "played out" and a "back number." This made him an easier tool in the hands of Kaiser Wilhelm, and also led to his getting a reputation for treachery which perhaps he did not wholly deserve. There was a very general feeling in Austria-Hungary which was sedulously fostered by Kaiser Wilhelm and his agents that promises made to the aged Emperor were not binding. They were only given to humour the old man, who was already in his dotage. Ferdinand of Bulgaria on several occasions failed to keep his engagements to the Emperor, although they had been solemnly made. Kaiser Wilhelm contrived to make Ferdinand and others besides see that the aged Emperor was not a factor to

be reckoned with seriously, and that the Empire was crumbling visibly. He and Germany were all that mattered in Europe. These influences go far to explain Ferdinand's policy during the Balkan war and afterwards. A man who can be led by his vanity is unfit for any position of importance, and still less to rule with an absolute sway such as he exercised in Bulgaria. His Parliament, which should have exercised a restraining influence, was rendered useless, as the leading members could be "bought" at any time. Ready money is rare in the Balkans, and the Austrian diplomatist knew full well the price of every politician at Sofia. It was amazingly small. Sometimes they stood out for an Order as well as money as the price of their dishonour, but as a rule money was sufficient to buy them to betray their country. It is surprising that men who had risen straight from the soil should have shown themselves so venial, but they had the example of their king before them, and this explains much. The atmosphere at Sofia was one of intrigue and crime. No one could stand against it. The common people, sturdy peasants, dimly comprehended that their king was not doing the best for them. They wished to join in any plot for his undoing that might be suggested to them. They looked towards

the Czar of All the Russias to deliver them from a distasteful alliance with Germany and Austria-Hungary. This made Ferdinand anxious to conciliate Russia if he wished to retain the sympathies of his people. The Austrians failed to understand these "extra tours," as they called Ferdinand's sudden *volte-face* in favour of Russia and the Slavs. The Viennese, although they liked him, mistrusted him profoundly. Just as some strange instinct led them to suspect the bluff friendliness of Kaiser Wilhelm, they regarded Ferdinand as an unknown book—a book of possibilities that might be to their advantage or might betray them to Russia, for both Germany and Austria-Hungary regarded the growing Russian menace with fear—a fear perhaps shared by Ferdinand, who had seen that Serbia and Montenegro, who trusted implicitly to Russia, had accomplished much of their aims. They had fulfilled many of their aspirations, and were in a fair way to realise the rest. Ferdinand, instead of obtaining advantages for his country, was now bribed to quiescence and silence by a new honour. The Golden Fleece was conferred upon him. This gratification of his vanity bound him closer to Austria-Hungary, for he owed the decoration to the good offices of Emperor Francis Joseph.

CHAPTER XV

THE PRINCE OF WIED

THE Powers of Europe decided that Albania should be constituted an independent kingdom, and a king chosen from among the European princes. The new ruler was to belong to some family that had possessed sovereign rights in the past, and this limited the choice very much. He was to come to his new home with all the lustre lent by the acknowledgment of his fellow rulers to one of equal birth. Many candidates, more or less suitable, were ready to accept the throne. Europe discussed their relative merits. The only people who had no voice at all in the matter were the Albanians themselves. They naturally did not want a sovereign chosen by the Powers, but one selected by themselves. They frankly said a complete stranger should be chosen, as the Roman Catholic tribes would not acknowledge the domination of a Moham-

medan; the Mohammedans would object to the chief of one of the Christian tribes; and the Greeks would submit to neither. Europe knew full well that the task of civilising the nation would be no easy one, and it was generally thought that the life of the new king would not be worth a month's purchase. Some of the malcontents were certain to attempt his life, almost as certain to succeed in killing him. Other people said that the task of ruling over Albania need not be more difficult than that of civilising Rumania or Bulgaria, and that it was only a question of finding the right man. Unfortunately, the Powers did not act loyally towards the new country. They made no attempt to study the interests of the population, but sought a ruler whose selection should provoke the minimum of objection from the other Powers. Germany wanted to place a German prince on the throne. Italy naturally objected to any man who would be a mere puppet in the hands of Austria or Germany. Austria objected to any Italian candidates. Finally the Powers agreed to accept a prince of irreproachable reputation and sprung from a very old family, but utterly devoid of brains. The Prince von Wied was selected for his lack of any prominent characteristics. The new prince had the out-

ward appearance of a monarch, being extremely tall and handsome, while his reputation as a military man left nothing to be desired. Nothing had ever been heard of him outside or indeed inside Germany, and the news was soon circulated in the inner circles of diplomacy that he had simply been selected as a figure-head. It was never expected that he would accomplish anything in any way. He had spent his life in German military circles and was the "ideal officer." Like most of his brethren in arms, he was empty-headed, possessed of an intelligence below the average, and spent his time in looking after his estates. This negative information was not unsatisfactory. The most important fact about the prince was carefully concealed, however. He was deep in debt. This was common among the young German officers, but whereas their debts were limited by the fact that purveyors refused to trust them, the Prince of Wied was heavily involved. The Albanians, who had agents all over Europe, discovered his predicament. They considered that a Balkan king must possess a fortune of his own, as they did not wish to pay a large civil list. All the Balkan princes who had come as strangers into the land brought riches and not debts with them. This gave them weight, not only among

their peers, but also among their subjects. A prince or king cannot be a pauper. Quite apart from minor considerations, his monetary difficulties would make him venial. The Albanians, accustomed to bribery and to rulers of very questionable morality, openly voiced this objection. They had no opinion of German or any other probity when exposed to temptation. The Italians in Albania, who had hoped for an Italian duke to forward their interests, did their best to exaggerate the financial straits of the Prince von Wied. While many stories about his poverty were heard, nothing was said about the family estates, which had been sufficient guarantee for the moneylenders. The moneylenders, who were ready to trust the Prince of Wied indefinitely, refused however to leave their money with a Balkan prince; that was a different matter. Jokes were heard in the cafés about the "pauper king" and Europe's appointment of a "beggar sovereign." The Servians, whose kings were poor but honest, openly derided the new importation. All these reports spread throughout Albania like wild-fire. It is remarkable that news is circulated much more quickly in Albania than in civilised countries. It is always the salient facts that are seized upon, unimportant details being

neglected in a manner peculiar to people who can neither read nor write, and whose heads are therefore phenomenally clear. Descriptions of the Prince, allusions to his martial figure, were good enough for the German papers.

Albania did not heed them. She knew that she was to be governed by a man who knew no word of the language, who brought no troops with him, and who not only had no money but was deep in debt. It was not thus that Albania pictured her king. She would even prefer to live under the domination of one of the native princes, who would have been as successful as the King of Montenegro in keeping his subjects in due order. There were several of these men who could have mounted the throne, and who would have known how to wield the sceptre. It did not suit Europe to create an independent Albania, however. Neither Italy nor Austria really wished the new venture to be a success, as they desired to share Albania, dividing it into two spheres of influence.

Prince von Wied had one saving virtue—he was modest and had no delusions on the subject of his capabilities. He hesitated greatly before accepting the charge. Alone, he would never have assumed the office thrust upon him. Unfortunately, he had a wife who was both ambi-

tious and lacking in intelligence. The Princess of Wied imagined that the Albanians could be ruled by the introduction of the same methods that impressed the intellectual circles in a German town. She was accustomed to preside over a number of ladies, "seekers of culture," and thought that she could exercise a similar influence over the Albanians. Neither she nor her husband realised that, when they left Germany for Albania, they were stepping right out of the twentieth century into the tenth. They both imagined that the Albanians would be impressed by the antique furniture which they sent on in advance to furnish the villa at Durazzo, not realising that the Albanians, accustomed to all the pomp of the Turkish pasha, simply regarded their "antiques" as a collection of quaint-looking lumber. The Albanians were correct in their estimate, for the objects which Princess von Wied considered so valuable were seen to be mere rubbish by the connoisseur. The Vienna furnishers who came down to arrange for the arrival of the new Prince, were horrified at the condition in which they found the palace. It was built, like all Albanian houses, as a kind of fortress. There were no windows at all on the lower floors. Loopholes, from which the muzzles of guns projected,

served instead of windows. Large apertures were too dangerous in a country inhabited by natives who were in the habit of potting-at the occupants of rooms on the ground floor. Inside the immense barn-like house the Vienna furnishers found vermin of all sorts. This is common in Albania, but the state of the palace was such that it should have warned them that the coming Prince was not popular, for they might have known that the rats had been introduced into the apartments as a protest. The rat-holes were hastily stopped up with cement, the mildewed walls were draped with costly hangings, but the workmen who were taken down for the job felt that it was no place either for a lady or children, and said so freely. Although they could not speak the Albanian language, they felt the antipathy of the natives. They were aware of the opposition that showed itself in a hundred different ways, too small to particularise, but all of which revealed dangers and difficulties for the new monarch.

The Prince made a round of the chief Courts of Europe, before reaching his new country. His fellow sovereigns were willing to do all they could to give him a good "send-off," and he was fêted everywhere. Diplomats, accus-



THE PRINCE OF WIED.

tomed to judging men, thought very poorly of his chances of success. He had numberless opportunities of finding out something about his future subjects. Men fresh from the Balkans were invited to meet him, but he did not care to avail himself of their information. Neither did he consult any statesmen of experience as to how he should act in any given circumstances; he appeared to think that he would know all this by instinct when once he had assumed the crown. Thus those accustomed to the cares of State watched the new man depart with strong misgivings.

The manner of his arrival was the initial mistake. He slipped into his new kingdom almost unannounced. He sneaked into the country like a political refugee who wishes to avoid the notice of the police. A handful of Albanians, gathered together at the last moment, shouted "Hurrah!" when he appeared, but even their enthusiasm was purchased, and not having been paid for on the usual scale, was correspondingly feeble and ineffectual. After making this unfortunate entry, the Prince settled down to do—nothing. The Albanians had learnt that the money given by the Powers for the administration of Albania had been applied to pay the Prince's private debts, as the

creditors had refused to allow him to leave Germany with his obligations unsettled; and they refused to welcome him. The Princess decorated her house, and attended to the furnishing of rooms for her children. She, at least, was delighted at the chance of being able to play at being a real Princess. The Prince himself was less contented. He was doubtful of the intentions of Essad Pasha, and confused by the different instructions he had received. Kaiser Wilhelm had promised to stand by him in his usual "shining armour" fashion, if he did exactly as the German envoy suggested. The Prince, however, was shrewd enough to see that German influence was of little value in the Balkans. Italy was evidently the dominant Power in Albania. Her agents had spent money freely. The Prince had reason to believe that Austria and Germany had also made large expenditures on the glorious work of colonisation, but he failed to observe the fruits. The younger generation of Albanians spoke Italian, which was taught in the schools. Proficiency in Italian was necessary for all who engaged in commerce and trade, as all the coasting business was with Italy. Although attempts had been made to establish schools where instruction was imparted in German, they refused to attend them and were

very averse to adopting German habits or customs. While the Prince spent his time in avoiding complications, by remaining within the palace, the Princess conferred with Viennese decorators about the furnishing. This naturally prejudiced the local workmen, and showed that she had not any grasp of the first duties of a ruling princess. Shortly after the arrival of the new Royal family, news was received that Albanian insurgents were advancing upon the capital. No one knew what they wanted. It is doubtful whether they knew themselves. They were aware that there was loot to be had in the palace. Perhaps that was the secret of their coming. The Prince, who had insisted upon two warships being stationed off Durazzo, now telegraphed for aid. More ships were sent. The Powers regarded this as unnecessary—Durazzo is situated at the farther end of a peninsula. The only path between Durazzo and the mainland is over a bottomless morass. The insurgents could only approach the place in single file and the approach to the palace could be swept by the cannon on the warships.

The Albanian insurgents might attempt a surprise attack, but all through the night searchlights swept the narrow neck of land that led to Durazzo.

The Prince was afraid of the unknown. Away from drill books and civilisation, he was quite helpless. It was at this critical moment that one of the cleverest diplomatists in Europe—the Italian Minister, Alliotto—who had been sent to Albania with a watching brief, played his trump card. When the danger seemed worst, he persuaded the Prince to flee. The “modern knight,” the representative of up-to-date chivalry as practised in the Guards in Berlin, actually fled from his new country and took refuge on the battleship. After several hours’ stay on the ship nothing happened, and he realised that he had been fooled by the astute diplomatist. The palace was not looted, could never have been looted, with the guns from the warships turned upon the twisting path across the marshes. No single Albanian insurgent could reach the spot. He left his wife and children in safety, and returned to the capital he had left, to resume a crown as one resumes an umbrella laid down at the club. He was received with derision. All Europe had got news of his flight. The Italian diplomatist had taken care of that. Photographs were taken on the spot. They showed the Prince leaving the palace in a panic and getting into the ship’s boat, and afterwards climbing up the side of the ship.

They were circulated through the European Press. Pictures of the palace, and of the small groups of tatterdemalions who had forced a German Prince and military expert to abdicate, were sown broadcast. Europe did not know that a swift little Italian boat had been waiting for weeks to carry away the news. The Italians knew that Germany and Austria would contradict the news of the Prince's flight. So they said: "Photographs cannot be contradicted. Let us have plenty."

The Prince was the laughing-stock of Europe. He was forced to abdicate. Even the Kaiser felt he could not advise him to remain on the throne after the painful incident. He did not even dare to return to Germany, but spent months in Italy, travelling, before he cared to face the music at Berlin. Germany and Austria had played against Italy for diplomatic supremacy in Albania. Italy had won all along the line. Not only had she succeeded in disgracing the German princelet, she had attained her own object, too—lowering Austrian prestige in the Balkans and raising her own.

CHAPTER XVI

THE KING OF THE BLACK MOUNTAINS

THE most interesting figure in South-Eastern Europe was King Nikita. He ruled over the smallest patch of country that can call itself a kingdom, but he is, perhaps, a more consummate diplomatist than any of his fellow Balkan monarchs who have been swayed by the King of Montenegro without suspecting it. He has great influence in a number of countries. This is due to his extraordinary foresight. He had a family of girls, who came of untainted stock, with a family reputation for sound health, both physical and mental. Surrounded by his handsome family, he realised that Europe was tired of German princesses—that their presence in every Court of Europe was displeasing to many monarchs, who did not wish German women to know State secrets and to be in a position to pass them on to powerful relatives at home.

He appears to have made a complete study of the subject of royal marriages. His girls, unlike the ordinary Balkan princesses, were brought up very simply. It is even reported that they were able to milk the cows and goats that strayed near the country home where they were educated. They had a training in practical housework, which took the place of the frivolities that usually go to make up princesses' lives. When they became of marriageable age, Nikita secluded them more carefully than before. No breath of scandal ever touched them. But their good qualities were reported far and wide, and did not escape those monarchs who were in search of a wife for the heir to the throne. Nikita managed to secure the throne of Italy for one daughter. The Italians are always grateful to the King for bestowing his daughter upon their ruler. The children that have been born to him are healthy beyond those of any of the aristocrats that surround the throne, for they inherit the sound constitution of their grandfather, the heartiest and halest man in Europe. The Grand Duke who took a daughter of the King of Montenegro to preside over his vast estates in Russia has never regretted his choice. Although both men have a needy father-in-law, and perhaps grudge the money that frequently

flows to Cetinje, they have secured wives with virtues that are worth much gold. The King of Montenegro enjoyed immunity from attack because of his highly placed sons-in-law, and was able to play a part in the politics of Europe that would not have been possible under other circumstances. After having taken the title of King instead of Prince, he came to Vienna to pay his first visit in the new capacity. Emperor Francis Joseph, ever ready to support all dignitaries, received him in a worthy manner, putting a suite of rooms reserved for kings at his disposal. King Nikita, who was seldom seen in Vienna, was decidedly popular, and the crowd showed great enthusiasm in welcoming him. He managed to enhance the importance of his visit by a circumstance that caused much speculation at the time. It was arranged that Nikita should go to the races and watch the Austrian "Derby," the closing event of the early summer season. He was accompanied by Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Duchess Hohenberg and a number of other members of the Imperial family, who always crowded into the Imperial box at the races, as they are all intensely interested in all that concerns horses. The King of Montenegro is also interested in everything connected with outdoor sports, and looked for-

ward to the event. Early on that Sunday morning the rumour was circulated in Vienna that an attempt was to be made upon the life of the visitor. Why anyone should wish to assassinate the King of Montenegro was a mystery—whether the King had the report circulated himself to increase his importance, or what it meant, was not clear. All Vienna hurried down, in spite of the blazing heat; no one wished to be absent at such a time. The police had taken precautions, which showed that they at least anticipated something. Every visitor to the Imperial enclosure had to walk through a long line of detectives and diplomatic agents. If none of them recognised him, he was followed and carefully hustled, as if by accident, into a corner far off the Imperial box. Other detectives crowded him and ascertained whether he had a bomb about his person by bumping against him. Persons in official capacities were, on the contrary, propelled as if by some unseen force to the front of the box, where they were forced to remain by pure physical pressure of the cordon of police in plain clothes, in spite of the blazing sun that beat down on the race-course. The old King came into the box. Duchess Hohenberg sat at his right, and entertained him in her best and most vivacious

manner. He greatly appreciated the trouble that she was taking with him in pointing out the different horses and telling him which colours belonged to this great aristocrat or that great politician. Archduchess Maria Annunziata, the abbess of a Bohemian convent, who had been charged with the task of conversing with the King, was only too willing to relinquish her seat of honour and to retire to the back to watch the racing with one of the juvenile Archdukes. The King watched the pretty woman by his side with admiration; her animation pleased him. Nikita felt in his element, the most important man in the place. He did not cut a bad figure even among the Austrian and Hungarian Archdukes, who are finely-built men, many of them being extraordinarily handsome. After the event of the afternoon was run and the cheering had ceased, the King, Archduke and Duchess departed, as is the custom of royalty. The members of the Imperial family stayed to watch the rest of the events, and only left five minutes before the end.

Upon the departure of the King and the Archduke the police cordon immediately relaxed. Persons who had been sandwiched in to form part of the buffer that protected the

Imperial box had free passage. The feeling of oppression, of expectation, relaxed. But still there was no explanation of the mysterious threats against the life of so unimportant a sovereign as the King of Montenegro. In the light of after events it occurred to many who assisted at that running of the Derby that it was the life of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand which was sought on that day. It was the first time for many months that he had appeared in public, and the dislike felt for him both by the people and by his near relatives had reached a dangerous pitch. No such tragedy as happened later at Sarajevo took place simply because the Austrian police was so efficiently organised and so powerful that it could prevent anything of the sort by a process of elimination. The same process might be witnessed every summer in Ischl, where no one was allowed to take up his residence unless he could give a satisfactory account of himself to the police. This was easy in Austria-Hungary, as there was no shifting population to be dealt with. An exact record of the past life of every person resident within the empire is kept. All suspects are watched. Thus Austria was the safest place in Europe for monarchs.

King Nikita departed as he had arrived, amid

the acclamations of the population. He had been gratified by the invitation, and King Peter of Servia had been correspondingly humiliated. He had never been invited to come to the Austro-Hungarian Court. This was a standing source of annoyance to the Serbs, who considered that it would have given him the prestige that he somehow lacked. They considered that the tragedy that had preceded his accession to the throne should be forgotten after the lapse of years. Emperor Francis Joseph, one of whose chief aims in life is the maintenance of the dignity of rulers and the magnifying of the vocation of kings, did not take this view. He said that as long as he lived King Peter should never come to Vienna. It would, perhaps, have been better had less been done to honour the King of Montenegro under these circumstances. In this and many other trifling affairs the wounds already inflicted upon Servian *amour propre* were kept open instead of being allowed to heal.

CHAPTER XVII

EMIGRATION PROMOTED BY GERMANY—SOCIAL QUESTIONS IN THE DUAL MONARCHY

THE numbers of emigrants to Canada, the States, and South America had been increasing in an alarming manner for many years. The large band of men who left their country might be divided into two classes. The larger class was composed of men who, weary of living under Austro-Hungarian administration, left the country for good, worked for money to build up a new home beyond the seas, and subsequently sent money to pay the fares of their wives and children, or other relatives to the new country.

The second class of emigrant that swelled the returns was the "season emigrant." He left for one, two, or three years, supported his family at home while working abroad, and returned with his savings at the end of the time to enrich the country of his birth. This class of man

increased the prosperity of the country. The American Government encouraged the permanent emigrant and objected to the "season" emigrant, who refused to become naturalised, and formed part of a large foreign element that it always regarded as potentially dangerous. The Austro-Hungarian Government, on the contrary, naturally encouraged the "season" emigrant, and did everything possible to deter men from agricultural countries from emigrating permanently.

During the Balkan wars the subject-races, always oppressed by the Central Government, were subjected to much harsh treatment because disorders were feared. Repressive measures were carried out very cruelly; no allowance was made for race and natural sympathy with their relatives across the border. The governors cared nothing if they could cow the population into obedience. The more independent spirits naturally escaped beyond the seas to avoid persecution. The mobilisation and the long time that the army remained on the frontiers made the Slavs fear that a war was coming. They did not desire to fight against the Serbs nor the Russians. The Austro-Italians who inhabit the southern coast-line and man the Austro-Hungarian fleet did not wish to be called upon to

fight against Italy. Thus almost all the inhabitants near the coast considered it better to get away while they could, and emigration on a vast scale began. Whole regions were depopulated. It was impossible to move off the main route of travel in Austria-Hungary at this period without being literally besieged by would-be emigrants. How could they learn English? Could it be done by correspondence? What other qualifications were necessary for emigrants to the States? It seemed as if the whole agricultural population was packing up to leave.

The Emperor once wished to send some rare game to New Zealand, and asked for a couple of men to accompany them. The entire countryside offered to travel with them to the far-off land, intending never to return. Istria, Hungary, Galicia, and the Bukowina swarmed with emigration agents. These agents were quite unscrupulous in their methods. They simply desired to make money quickly. They got the usual bonus from the companies on each emigrant induced to travel by their line, and besides were subsidised by big companies who wished to populate large tracts of land abroad. These companies promised the emigrants free holdings. The peasant, who was greedy for free-

hold land, naturally jumped at the offer, and left his village without much persuasion. The agents, knowing full well that the Austro-Hungarian Government must not get information as to the way in which the country was being literally bled of its best military material, shipped the young men of military age *viâ* Bremen or Hamburg. The wives and children went *viâ* Trieste or Fiume. Thus the figures sent in to the Austro-Hungarian Government gave no indication of what was going on. This business went on undetected for about ten years.

Suddenly the explosion came. Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the heir to the throne, discovered that a hundred thousand recruits fit for service had got away in a single year. An inquiry was held into the matter. A ramification of frauds, such as could only exist where the officials were in sympathy with the population, was discovered. In many cases boys were registered as girls with female names. When they grew up they left the country or remained in some remote village where no one had any interest to reveal their presence. Their employers did not want to spare them for the army. Others whose mothers had not been sufficiently far-seeing to arrange matters early in life

emigrated, with documents borrowed from a friend for the occasion. The documents were then sent back by messenger over the frontier to the rightful owner. When either of these methods was impracticable, medical certificates testifying unfitness were procured. Certificates of this kind were cheap. The demand was so great that there was a keen competition, and military doctors were not able to stand out for large bribes, especially in out-of-the-way places. The feeling of the whole country was with the man who refused to fight for the German and Magyar overlords.

A number of emigration agents were hastily clapped into prison, travelling offices were closed, and a minute investigation was begun.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand, who undertook the task himself, soon discovered that Austria-Hungary had been drained of its best fighting material by Germany. Cheap passages had been offered to emigrants by the Hamburg and Bremen lines. They were no doubt anxious to make substantial profits. He went into the figures and was startled to find that the heavy Government subsidies enabled them to carry emigrants at a loss. He immediately detected the hand of Kaiser Wilhelm behind this. Ger-

many had robbed her Poles of their land in order to colonise German Poland with Teutons. The Kaiser was now trying to drain Austria-Hungary of its Slav population and to replace them by German emigrants. That was the meaning of the great emigrant traffic and of the secrecy with which it had been carried on.

Francis Ferdinand was furious when he discovered the truth. Men of military age were not allowed to cross the frontier without explaining where they were going.

The emigrants, however, got away in hundreds every week, in spite of all restrictions. The trouble that had been made about recruits leaving the country convinced people on the frontiers and at the sea coast that a great war was coming. The Slavs and the Italians, who were determined not to be involved, took train to the nearest frontier station and simply walked across without passports. It was soon discovered that as the German emigration figures fell, the numbers of young men of military age leaving Russia and Italy for the States increased. Emigration had not been stopped; it had only been diverted to other channels. This discovery enraged the Austrian Government.

Sentinels were posted on the frontiers to

watch for young men, but as the sentinels belonged to the disaffected races the men got past all the same.

The restriction upon emigration pressed particularly hardly upon the Bosnian Slavs. The seething discontent that had increased every year since the annexation would never have become dangerous had the restless spirits been allowed to leave for the States. Families would have felt that their sons were safe from the bad treatment in the army and would have waited patiently until they had enough money to join them in the States. The sudden checking of all these hopes, the shutting of the only door of escape, brought the discontent to a head. There were rumours of disaffection among the subject-races everywhere. Sure of a warm welcome from their fellow-countrymen on the other side should trouble force them to leave, the people along the frontiers became very restless. There was every indication that the Austro-Hungarian conglomeration of nationalities and States could not be kept together much longer. Archduke Francis Ferdinand was pleased at these indications. He, in common with the remainder of the military party, was looking for an excuse for a war. Thus he and the army put more pressure upon

the Serbs in Hungary instead of relieving them from some of the grosser forms of oppression. Kaiser Wilhelm encouraged the Archduke in this policy. He wished Austria-Hungary to realise that it had reached a crisis in its history that could only be solved by a war.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE AGRARIANS AND THE SHORTAGE OF FOOD

THE Agrarians, or great landowners, both in Austria and Hungary were largely responsible for the Great War. If commercial relations between Austria and the Balkans had been satisfactory there would have been no discontent. The Balkans are agricultural lands; large crops of corn, vegetable products, and meat were produced. Hungary is also a rich agricultural country, and supplies its own needs entirely, with a surplus for Austria. Austria and Germany cannot exist on the produce of their land. Both countries have densely populated manufacturing districts that must be supplied with food. Hungary wished to obtain the best prices for her commodities. She therefore objected to Balkan products being imported. The goods had to enter over her railways. She

prevented their coming in by imposing vexatious restrictions and refusing cargoes on all kinds of grounds. Austria would not forbid the import of meat and other products directly. This would have prejudiced her political relations with the Balkans. Nor did she wish to discourage the Balkan peoples from breeding cattle. The shortage of meat in Austria might force the Government to import it at any time. So she took a most unworthy course. She allowed the Agrarians to carry on their nefarious methods and thus earned the bitter hatred of the Balkan peoples, especially of Servia and Montenegro. For some years cattle-breeders in the Balkan countries did not realise why their products were returned so frequently. Finally, discovering that they were simply the playthings of the Agrarians, they ceased to breed cattle and turned their vast pastures into corn land. The Agrarians, men who travelled but little and had no grasp of the speed with which innovations are introduced and new plans adopted in this century, were sadly surprised and not a little dismayed when they discovered that the Serbs and other Balkan countries had no more meat for sale. Every summer there was a considerable shortage of meat in Austria and the cities of Hungary. This was due to a

number of causes insignificant in themselves, but far-reaching as regards the history of Europe. The butchers said the regular annual shortage was largely owing to supplies being sent to Germany, to Bohemia, and the Tyrol in the tourist season, when large quantities of meat were required for the foreigners who came into the country. The real reason was that the country was being drained of its best blood by emigration. Farmers were forced to kill off their cattle because there were no shepherds to care for it. The day of the small peasant-proprietor was over. He had left for the States. It was found more profitable to grow corn than to keep cattle for the market on the immense farms on the great Hungarian plains. No one had realised that the Balkan States had rendered themselves independent of Austria-Hungary, and that no supply would be forthcoming even when the frontiers were thrown open. The Agrarians, when they heard of the shortage, suggested that the people should do without meat. Riots ensued, and violent scenes occurred in Vienna. The military was brought out to disperse the crowd. Hungarian hussars were brought from Budapesth to shoot on a crowd chiefly made up of Germans and Slavs. As the soldiers

rode forward to charge the people in front of the Vienna Rathhaus, women climbed into their saddles, and, rendered desperate by fear for their husbands and children, wound themselves round the waists of the hussars, thus effectually preventing them from using their swords. Some men had four women hanging from their waists as they charged upon the crowd. The horses, trained for show and parade, were very careful not to dislodge the extra riders and advanced at an amble. The Hungarian officers who led the men tried to incite them to show a different spirit, but although they charged the crowd not more than a hundred civilians were seriously injured. The men cut the air above their heads with their long sabres, and although they were Hungarians and Magyars, and were faced by a crowd they disliked and despised, humanitarian feelings were stronger than the commands of their officers. Many people in Vienna that day doubted whether conscripts would ever fight against the populace. Before night, however, the spirit of the troops changed. The people, desperate with hunger, put up barricades in some of the chief streets; they tore down the gas lamps and set fire to the stream of coal-gas thus released. They plundered the shops of

unpopular tradesmen and distributed eatables among the crowd. When the troops appeared they were received by a shower of stones, while even the pavements were torn up to provide missiles. The soldiers, thoroughly enraged, turned a murderous fire upon the people. The city was put under martial law, and everyone who ventured through the streets was searched for weapons. Walking the streets was a dangerous pastime for strangers, as sentries only challenged once and shot if the command to halt were not complied with. Similar riots on a larger scale took place in Budapesth. They were suppressed in a more brutal manner than those in Vienna, while in Prague the situation became so alarming that a revolution was feared. It was then that the Agrarian party became alarmed, and agreed to a suggestion for the importation of frozen meat from Argentina. A committee of officials and experts was sent to Argentina to arrange for the sending of frozen meat to Trieste. The Argentine Government was ready to comply with all the very intricate demands and requirements of the Austrian Government, and, being unversed in the history of the Balkans, believed that Austria was capable of a perfectly straightforward deal. One party of the Government, seeing the

gravity of the disturbances, really wished to alleviate the sufferings of the people by the importation of frozen meat. The Agrarians, on whose head the blood-guilt of the European war really rests, played the same unstatesmanlike trick upon Argentina as they had successfully carried out in the case of the Balkans. The first load of meat duly arrived. It was sold immediately. This did not suit the short-sighted Agrarians, who immediately began a plan for the defeat of the innovation. With the consent of the Government they began an agitation against frozen meat. Butchers circulated stories that it was unsound, and as it was sold at prices that corresponded very nearly with those of fresh meat, it naturally remained on their hands. This was seized upon as an excuse by the Government to stop the import of any more meat. Even then the Government could not act with common straightforwardness. The cargo was allowed to come, and turned back at Trieste. The boat ran over to an Italian port, where the meat was sold without difficulty. But Austrian credit had suffered largely. The political relations with Argentina were strained, and the country lost many a good customer through her dishonesty. This mattered little

to the Agrarians, who got good prices for their meat.

Another attempt was made to introduce sea-fish for popular consumption. The Government put a quick goods train service on from the Adriatic, and with cars especially constructed for keeping fresh fish in ice through the hot nights. This did not suit the Agrarians, who had immense breeding-places for carp and who reared trout in their streams. As was to be expected, the trains were delayed, and the fish reached Vienna and Budapesth in a state unfit for food. No statesman in Austria-Hungary raised his voice against this trickery. No one cared whether the people starved or not, provided the Agrarians were satisfied. Archdukes, who might have raised their voices and have made them heard, were themselves engaged in trade. They had immense dairies and other establishments, where the produce of their lands was sold. Their interests were contrary to those of the people and to those of the country at large. They sided with the Agrarians in what was a crisis in their own history and that of their country. Meat riots were succeeded by disturbances about house accommodation. In order to keep up rents, regulations preventing the building of new

blocks of flats were made in both Vienna and Budapesth. Similar enactments existed in many other large cities in Austria-Hungary, but they pressed hardest of all in the capitals. The landlords, freed from healthy competition, not only demanded high rents, but they refused to accept tenants with children. Men well able to pay high rents were forced to go from house to house begging the porter to show them flats, and were turned away time and time again simply because they had the misfortune to have a family consisting not of six healthy children, but of one quiet child of ten. At one period things were so bad that a workman with six children, who had been unable to get accommodation anywhere, camped out with his family on the Graben, the chief promenade in the very centre of the city. Others knocked up wooden shanties on Crown land near the mountains. At last the city decided to put up a number of sheds for the accommodation of persons who had been expelled from the flats because they had children. In Budapesth things were much worse. There were riots, and the effigies of unpopular landlords were burned. Troops were called out and rioters shot, but this brutal suppression of the working class only increased the irritation felt against the Government. It was clear even

to the uninitiated that affairs were reaching a climax. The discontent that had begun in the working classes was quickly spreading to the small employé and even to the professional classes and officers in the army. This was due not only to lack of food or accommodation, but to the enormous increase in the cost of living, which had its root in the alarming rise in taxation. This taxation was due to the two mobilisations during the Annexation crisis and the Balkan wars, which had cost Austria-Hungary many millions. The discovery that many things essential to an army were lacking had led to reckless expenditure. Not only had money been spent on legitimate needs, but immense swindles had been perpetrated in connection with army supplies. Highly-placed personages had been connected with these incidents which consequently were never properly sifted, those most deeply implicated having the power to prevent investigation. Further, mistakes on a vast scale were made. The type of cannon recommended for the army, and supplied to all the regiments, proved to be quite useless when employed in frontier skirmishes. It was replaced by new weapons at enormous cost. Other occurrences of the same kind led to the Budget being far above the yearly income

of the State. It became apparent to all responsible for the conduct of the State that something must happen. The strain was too great—a breakdown somewhere was inevitable.

CHAPTER XIX

COUNT LEOPOLD BERCHTOLD AND COUNT STEPAN TISZA, THE MEN WHO DECIDED ON WAR

COUNT BERCHTOLD, the Austro-Hungarian Minister who was responsible for the policy that led to the Great War, is the prototype of the Austro-Hungarian aristocrat, and essentially a gentleman. He was for this reason totally unfit to cope with the crowd of unscrupulous pro-German politicians around him. He was brought up in the old school, and no one who knows him personally would hesitate to describe him as a gentleman *par excellence*. The fine, delicate features, the slim, slender hands, and a bearing that has something almost apologetic, are characteristic of the man. He is the ideal landowner and feudal lord, able to manage large estates, a merciful landlord who would remit rent in bad years, a kindly neighbour, and valued friend.

Count Berchtold's greatest interest was horse-racing, and his large fortune enabled him to keep a splendid stud. He invariably attended all the big race-meetings, but he was there merely to watch the horses, not to meet the representatives of the diplomatic and political world like his fellow-officials. His eye never wandered from the course during the whole meeting. Other politicians never so much as glanced at the horses; they were concentrating their attention on more important matters. A secretary posted them in the events to enable them to discuss them when necessary, to keep up the farce that they were there to watch the horses. They watched their opportunity to slip up to some great man and discuss some point at issue between them in a friendly and casual way. The Foreign Minister knew nothing of such manœuvres. If he wished to discuss a delicate matter with the Ambassador of some unfriendly Power, he sought him in his Embassy and at once raised the question to an affair of State instead of ascertaining in a non-committal way how matters stood before formulating a demand. Count Berchtold was essentially an honest and straightforward man when he took over the onerous duties of Foreign Minister, and had no slur upon his character.

He was very loth to assume the responsibilities of office, and only accepted at the Emperor's direct request. He felt that he was not fit to take the helm of State at such a critical moment. There is not the slightest doubt that the Count was correct in the estimate of his own powers. It would have required a much less simple-minded man to guide the country through the troubled waters which seethed all around. The Hungarian aristocrat, perhaps more than the Austrian noble, lives a somewhat secluded life far from railroad and market town. He is brought up in the same way as the old feudal barons in the Middle Ages. He is surrounded by a swarm of servants, whom he regards more in the light of serfs than free men. He fills the obligations as well as enjoys the privileges of a feudal overlord. The young aristocrat enjoys life. It is made up of hunting, often in the primæval forest; he is constantly invited to shooting-parties, and spends his time in that and other manly and outdoor occupations. He is always an expert climber, can stalk a chamois, and would never fear for his footing on the most precipitous rocks. He can fence, box, and is, of course, an expert swordsman. He never knows when he may be called upon to fight a duel, with any weapons. He learns to speak

four or five languages from native tutors. He must be proficient in German, French, and, if possible, English and Italian, before he leaves the schoolroom. He acquires these languages without trouble, often from his nurses, and learns to ride while still little more than a baby. All these accomplishments fit him to cut a figure in the fashionable world, but form a poor equipment for battling with foreign diplomatists, who have had the advantage of a training in a much severer school. Even if the education, which he receives at the hands of a tutor, chosen rather for his sporting proclivities than for his erudition, is completed by a university course, no professor in Austria-Hungary would venture to deal with a young aristocrat in the same fashion as with a student belonging to the middle classes. Thus, although the aristocrat is peculiarly suited to occupy important positions on account of his birth and manners, he is frequently unfit to deal with very intricate problems or to match his wits against those of other politicians. Count Berchtold was a great favourite in Vienna because of his hospitality. The Hungarians are known far and wide for their hearty hospitality, and he even excelled the traditions of his race. He gave entertainments at the Ballplatz, the Austro-Hungarian

Foreign Ministry, close to the Hofburg, that were unique of their kind. He had a kindly word for everyone who entered the vast *salles* that opened one into the other at the top of the great marble staircase. Beneath the historic portraits he entertained Archduchess and peasant deputy with unvarying affability. When he was seen in other social centres it was always conceded that he was the most distinguished-looking man in the room. The tall, dark figure flitted restlessly to and fro, always anxious to contribute his part to making the entertainment a success. But close observers noted something in the formation of the skull and the glance of the eye that denoted lack of firmness. He was a man who could be persuaded against his better judgment. Had he been called upon, like most of his predecessors in office, to be a mere figurehead, all would have been well, but under the actual circumstances it was fatal to the peace of Europe. It is more than probable that Berchtold was chosen to fill the important post at the suggestion of Count Tchirsky, or some other emissary of Kaiser Wilhelm, who desired to have a weak man in power in Vienna.

Once he had taken office, Count Berchtold discovered that all quiet was at an end. There

were constant attacks upon him in the German subsidised Press of Vienna. During the long diplomatic struggles that took place while he held office he was accused of hesitation and of vacillation. He was, however, merely trying to steer a middle course between the two policies dictated by the two parties within the Empire. The Emperor was firm in his desire to die in peace. His reign had begun with the loss of territory following upon defeat on the battlefield. It was well known that he absolutely refused to contemplate any policy that might lead the Empire into further hostilities. It was the Emperor who sent the autograph letter to the Czar in the Annexation year, begging him to allow him to go down to the grave in peace, and to desist from a war which seemed inevitable. On the other hand, Archduke Francis Ferdinand was anxious for a war. He was at the head of the military party, composed of the younger aristocrats, who were more or less tools in the hands of Kaiser Wilhelm. They comprehended nothing of what war meant at this period in the world's history. They suspected nothing of the plans of Kaiser Wilhelm, who pushed the Emperor of Austria into the foreground when he wished the scales to be turned in favour of peace, and skilfully brought

forward the military party when he wished Austria-Hungary to threaten war. Count Berchtold was very sensitive to public opinion; the attacks made upon him by the Press, hinting that he was lacking in courage, annoyed him. They also prepared public opinion for war. Austria-Hungary was depicted as the sufferer from a hundred slights—as the down-trodden country that was forced to bear all kinds of insults. Insults from Servia, insults from Montenegro, had been accepted lying down. All news of what the small Balkan States had to endure before they made the protests was, of course, suppressed. Their point of view was never considered. Caricatures of Count Berchtold, showing him on his way to Salonica but frightened to go on by the claws of the Russian bear, were published in the comic papers. The lengths to which these papers went in turning the Foreign Minister to ridicule—a deadly crime in Austria-Hungary—was indicative of the strength of the Imperial Germans in Austria. They were even able to protect their minions against the Austrian censor. When any politician showed indications of strong-mindedness and of a disposition to resist German influence, the terrors of the German subsidised Press were turned upon him. He

invariably had to go. The Press in Count Berchtold's case, however, was merely used to bring him to a sense of his own impotence and to deceive him as to the state of public opinion. The Germans did not desire his dismissal, although they frequently had rumours of his impending resignation published. His being in office suited their purpose much too well for them to wish to see him leave his place. Count Tchirsky and other pro-Prussians filled the air with rumours of the Emperor's inability to rule. They said that the old man was in his dotage. This sounded reasonable, although it was by no means the case. Count Berchtold was naturally inclined to believe these reports, as, although he was very loyal to his sovereign, he, like many other men of the modern school, could not comprehend the monarch's peculiar idiosyncrasies, and was apt to mistake his religious fervour for an expression of feeble-mindedness. This rendered Berchtold ready to believe the insinuations that were cunningly suggested to him that the Emperor could not be trusted with secrets of State. He might tell all to his father-confessor, who would report it to Rome, where the hated Italians might learn it, said the German diplomatists. Berchtold thus entered on a course that led to the undoing

of his country. He acted without consulting the Emperor, and concealed important facts from him at times of crisis. His tempters no doubt showed him good and sufficient reason why he should do this. The course was, however, a lapse from honesty—an honesty that had been Berchtold's chief virtue. So long as the supreme power was vested in one man, that man, whatever his age, should have been in possession of the full facts of the case. The Emperor of Austria alone had to decide whether there should be peace or war, and his Foreign Minister had no right to deceive him on any point. Count Berchtold and the German Ambassador had guilty secrets between them. It was thus that the Ambassador got his hold over the Foreign Minister and used it mercilessly. The country gentleman could not believe that the German aristocrats around him were liars and were capable of acts unthought-of by persons of his simple creed.

History will pronounce judgment on Berchtold. Contemporaries see him as a weak man, who lost his country's cause through a complete inability to cope with the scoundrels who surrounded him. He was unable to comprehend the peculiar art of lying that German diplomacy had brought to a fine art, the sphinx-like pro-

mises that could be made and interpreted according to need. A man of less honourable instincts would have been more capable of dealing with the situation; a man of character might have saved his country.

Count Tisza, the Hungarian Premier, was a man of iron will. He was frequently called the Hungarian "Cromwell," "the man with the mailed fist." He had fought more duels than any other Hungarian aristocrat, and his courage was well proven. Not only had he physical courage, but moral courage as well. Like Count Berchtold, he had received the education and training of a Hungarian aristocrat. He is an autocrat of the old school, whose strong will has never been broken by opposition. Possessed of great strength of character, but educated in an atmosphere of unreality, he had no grasp of what was really happening in Europe. Tisza always prided himself on his loyalty to the Emperor. When the sovereign told him to reduce the rebellious Hungarian Parliament to order, he did not hesitate to order the soldiers to drag out offending members. On another occasion he had armed men placed at the entrance to the House to prevent the entrance of all refractory members. The Emperor and Tisza both looked upon the Parliament as a

necessary evil that must be dealt with in the best way circumstances allowed. Neither of them considered that the people had any rights. They were not of the same flesh and blood as Emperors and Counts.

This autocratic idea, born of circumstances and surroundings, led both men to act in a most tyrannous way towards the people. Tisza especially had a profound contempt for the mob. He looked upon the subject-peoples as beneath contempt. Neither he nor his Imperial master could brook Notes sent by the Serbs. It seemed to them the acme of impertinence that a nation of so little importance should dare to address the Emperor of Austria as an equal.

Count Tisza has always been most anxious to make Hungary equal to Austria. He considered that the two nations should enjoy equal rights. He resented the fact that the Court was established at Vienna, and that Budapesth always took a second place. Tisza and every Hungarian statesmen knew that the common funds were spent for the benefit of Austria rather than for that of Hungary. At the same time Hungary, who claimed equal rights with Austria, always refused to take a half of the common expenses on her shoulders; the Hungarian share was always a third, Austria paying

two-thirds. Hungary is very wealthy, but has very little ready money. Her nobles regulate taxation and take great care that the burden falls on the people in the way of indirect taxation of necessities. Before the war there was no income tax in Hungary, although the revenues enjoyed by the great landowners are immense. Kaiser Wilhelm was very exactly informed of the relations between Austria and Hungary. He took pains to attach Tisza to his person. Tisza was invited to Berlin frequently; he was summoned to confer with the Kaiser constantly, while Count Berchtold was seldom consulted. The Kaiser dazzled Tisza and the Hungarians with promises of assistance in their fight against Austria. The Kaiser seemed to be the only man who comprehended their position. An ambitious and warlike people, the Magyar minority could not be swamped by the Slavs within the kingdom, or overwhelmed by the Germans in Austria. Count Tisza, although a very strong man, is not capable of comprehending a character like that of Kaiser Wilhelm. Single of purpose himself, he cannot comprehend duplicity in another. Like the Emperor Francis Joseph and Count Berchtold, he was duped. He desired to go to war with Servia because, like



COUNT TISZA.



COUNT BERCHTOLD.

Count Berchtold, his personal vanity had been hurt. He could not take an international view of the situation. The great Slav peril within the Empire seemed more important to him than the fear of All-German domination.

Count Tisza might have done much to save his country from ruin; instead, he preferred to see the subject-races oppressed. He considered that a war that would enable the Government to thin out the Slavs, by letting them fight one against the other, the soldiers from within the Empire against those without, would secure the supremacy of the Magyars. He failed to comprehend that the Magyars were to be thinned out in their turn to make way for Germans who wished to exploit the rich treasures of Hungary and exhaust her mineral wealth.

Count Tisza was a gambler accustomed to play with gentlemen; when he played at statesmanship with the German Emperor he did not count upon his adversary using loaded dice.

The very uprightness of his character prevented his suspecting others. The man in the street suspected Kaiser Wilhelm; the Premier did not.

The Hungarian aristocrat had never been "up against life"; he had no instinct to guide him. He fondly believed that he was twisting

the Kaiser round his finger and using him for his own ends. These ends were the glorification of Hungary, for Tisza is a patriot to his finger-tips. Unfortunately, he was deeply imbued with the sentiment that a king cannot commit meannesses. He placed the Kaiser on the same level as a Hungarian noble.

CHAPTER XX

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY AS A MILITARY AND NAVAL POWER

IN 1907 Austria-Hungary, where conscription is in force, had an army of about three million men when fully mobilised. These men were of excellent physique, since they were selected as the most promising material among a number of men fit for service. Every year when the annual contingent of recruits came up for service, a larger number were passed as "fit" than could be put into training. About a third of the "fit" were sent home; they were selected by lot, and although they were not called upon to serve immediately, they were under the obligation to do so when required. Thus there was a large second line of untrained men fit for service and ready to be called up when necessary. The high standard of efficiency resulted in only the very best material being selected; there were many

among the rejected who could be called to the colours in time of necessity.

Besides this, the military authorities pursued a definite policy. They were willing to grant exemption to the city man who could be usefully employed in clerical work in war time, and devoted their energies to training the peasant for actual fighting.

All this resulted in the official figures of the available men giving no real estimate of the numbers that were actually available.

Much money and attention were devoted to the minor branches of the service. Armament factories were increased and flying fields established in connection with all the army corps headquarters. The preparations for a possible war, while being carried on with great energy and at great expense, were somewhat delayed by an incurable habit, peculiar to the Austrians, of giving great attention to branches of the service that were anything but essential. Experiments were made in ski-running on the Alps in winter. Small companies of men were frequently lost in the Tyrol while trying to cross difficult ground. It was felt in the country generally that the attempts to get over the glaciers and snowfields might just as well have been made in summer, when there was not the same danger

from avalanches, and even if war with Italy were inevitable, ski-running practised within view of the Italian frontier was not likely to calm Italian susceptibilities. Aviation, which had long been recognised as the war weapon of the future, was quite neglected. The Government refused to purchase the necessary airships. The Austrians, with all their mechanical genius, were not able to make the motors for aeroplanes. Austrian inventors had to obtain motors from France before their airships could fly. The conservatism of thought and methods which made the Austro-Hungarian Government neglect the air service, led them to misread the signs of the times, and to allow the fleet to sink to a mere nothing. Although they were building up the fortifications along the Austro-Hungarian frontier, a queer optimism made them count upon Italy's help in the Mediterranean. Meanwhile they worked up their land fortifications. The Austro-Hungarian naval ports are models of what Nature can do in the way of natural defences. Cattaro is practically impregnable from the sea side. The gulf winds in and out, and the approach to the city can be defended at every turn. The military and naval authorities felt quite secure of Cattaro, and it was only in the Annexation year, when there was

trouble with Montenegro, that it was discovered that the cannon on the summit of Mount Lovcen could be fired right into Cattaro. The boundary line between Austria-Hungary and Montenegro runs close to the summit of the mountain. The Austrians considered that it would be very easy to capture the top of the precipitous mountain should war break out between the small country and themselves, but it was a very serious offset to the value of Cattaro. There was a large choice of suitable naval ports along the coast besides Cattaro. The only consideration that made a selection difficult was the question of railway communications with the interior.

Sebenico was also built out as a naval base, but, like Cattaro, there was no railway to connect it with the interior, as the narrow gauge Bosnian railways were of little practical use for military purposes. They were either light mountain railways or narrow gauge. This meant that all transports must be unloaded at the Hungarian frontier. Neither Cattaro nor Sebenico could thus be utilised as first-class naval bases until the Bosno-Herzegowinan railway system had been changed. Plans for this project were made and the money was voted, but the work had not been begun at the outbreak

of the Great War. The naval authorities established excellent wireless stations and repairing shops at these ports. The Government was disinclined to spend money on these ports, because the population was either Italian or Serb, and not easy to cow into subjection, like inland peoples. A seafaring people were always able to make good their escape should danger threaten. If the sea coast were watched too carefully for them to get away by boat, there was a wild mountainous district behind, where a man could hide among the rocky crags undisturbed until the hue and cry after him had died down. Just as the Bohemians near the German frontier were always inclined to be restive, and the Government more or less obliged to take a lenient view of their offences, so the Dalmatians were seldom subjected to persecution. Austria-Hungary never let off her wrath on those able to defend themselves.

Political considerations hampered the Austro-Hungarian Government in her choice of ports and in her shipbuilding. Austria wished to get all the shipbuilding orders, and was willing to make concessions to Hungary in agricultural affairs in order to secure them. Hungary, however, was not disposed to accept these.

Austria-Hungary only settled upon a definite

naval policy after the Annexation crisis. It was decided then that the new boats should be built in Trieste, and then tugged round to Pola for fitting. The Hungarians complained bitterly, and insisted upon some orders being placed at Fiume also. Slips for Dreadnoughts were prepared in Hungarian dockyards. The first Dreadnoughts, however, were built at the Stablimento Tecnico, in Trieste. This caused a storm of indignation all along the Adriatic. Austria had fostered Trieste at the expense of all other ports—both Hungarian and Italian—on the sea coast. Two railways carried goods from Trieste to Vienna. Preference tariffs were given to goods shipped over the Austrian ports. Italian firms found it cheaper to get their goods *via* Trieste than *via* Venice. Every form of ruse and trickery for magnifying the importance of Trieste and decreasing that of Venice was used. In some cases, Austrian firms received large State subventions to enable them to undersell Italian firms. Thus Trieste absorbed much of the trade that formerly went *via* Genoa to Switzerland and Germany. In bolstering up Trieste and its trade the Government was not actuated by commercial considerations only. The mercantile fleet proved an excellent training-school for sailors; the population was com-

posed mostly of Italians and Slavs, seafaring people who had been accustomed to earn their living on the water for generations and generations. Austria-Hungary, when contemplating her failures in many parts of the country, could always point to Trieste as a complete success. Unfortunately, Kaiser Wilhelm also regarded the seaport as an entire success. The splendid docks, stretching miles inland, where light boats could be built, the yards at Montfalcone, all stirred a feeling of covetousness in the monarch, who was never satisfied. He actually commenced negotiations to get possession of Trieste. He needed a port in the Mediterranean or in the Adriatic for the re-fitting, re-fuelling, and provisioning of German ships in times of peace. Austria-Hungary refused on one occasion to cede her best port to Kaiser Wilhelm, but an agreement that Germany could use it as a coaling-station was entered into.

The first Dreadnoughts built for the Austro-Hungarian Navy just after the Annexation crisis were laid down secretly. Although permission to build Dreadnoughts had been given at the Delegations, many Members of Parliament opposed the granting of the money, on the ground that Austria-Hungary could not afford to embark on a policy that might embroil her

with other nations. Her army was sufficiently large to protect her and assure her that respect among the Great Powers that she had a right to demand. The Government, to save argument, thus laid down the Dreadnoughts without announcing the fact. When the news that the first ship was partially ready and the second had already been laid down was made public, the other nations of Europe naturally felt that Austria-Hungary had stolen a march upon them. She specialised in building submarines and torpedoes at this time. The necessary expense was provided for by a special species of book-keeping. Money voted for education and similar purposes was devoted to the construction of submarines, and the public and Europe were kept in ignorance of the true uses to which it was put.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the late heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary, was especially interested in shipbuilding. He had a valid excuse for remaining far from the capital. The fine dust from the limestone with which Vienna is built injured his lungs, which were already delicate. He therefore stayed for the greater part of the year at Miramare, a beautiful castle close to Trieste, or at Brioni, farther along the coast. The Duchess and the children enjoyed the stay

near the sea. He ran to and fro in a swift yacht, visited Pola and Fiume, and assisted at the experiments which were being carried on there. Kaiser Wilhelm frequently came to visit Corfu, and stayed at Miramare *en route*. The two men who were plotting for world-empire spent many hours together. The Kaiser was frequently accompanied by experts, who travelled *incognito* at the command of the Emperor.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand, brought up, like all the Austro-Hungarian Imperial family, in an atmosphere of unreality, suspected nothing of the Kaiser's ulterior motives in coming to Trieste. He even followed his suggestions for the gradual removal of all Italians employed in Government service.

CHAPTER XXI

ARCHDUKE CARL FRANCIS JOSEPH

ARCHDUKE CARL FRANCIS JOSEPH resembles the present Emperor of Austria and King of Hungary very closely, though the resemblance is apparent rather in a certain peculiar charm of manner than in a similarity of features. Their colouring is identical, and when on the outbreak of war the aged Emperor made a triumphal entry into Vienna amid enthusiastic crowds such as the capital had never seen, with the heir to the throne by his side in an open carriage, everyone remarked on a resemblance that had escaped them before. "He might be the Emperor's grandson," was heard on every side, as the two men who held the destinies of the land in their hands went by. They sat stiffly upright, for both have the carriage that marks a thorough military training; both acknowledged the frenzied acclamations of the

crowd with a truly royal reserve, in contrast with the eagerness of Ferdinand of Bulgaria or Wilhelm of Prussia, who could not conceal their extreme delight at the shouts of the populace. Both Emperor and Archduke have always been popular.

The Archduke had received the careful training that is given to one who is expected to fill a high place in life. He learned English at the same time as he learned German from an English governess, who succeeded in implanting a love for her native land in the heart of the young Archduke. The Austrians considered that he was too British in his tastes in many ways, and much too inclined to go in for games of every kind instead of attending to the more serious studies that took up so large a part of his time already. While the young Archduke showed great enthusiasm for tennis, for dancing and skating, he cared but little for abstruse studies. None of the Habsburgs ever gave evidence of great mental powers, and the Archduke was true to the family traditions in this respect. Educated in Vienna, where dancing and music are regarded as the chief end of life, it was natural that he should enjoy both. It is also a debatable point whether accomplishments of this kind are not more

desirable for the young man who wishes to get into touch with his subjects and with foreign diplomatists than a taste for discussion. Unfortunately, the Archduke was encouraged to pursue a very frivolous life. The wicked uncle of the fairy tale is frequently seen in real life. In this case he enjoyed unusual powers. When Archduke Otto died he left his brother, Archduke Francis Ferdinand, guardian to his two boys. The heir to the throne and his ambitious morganatic wife thus had the care of educating the boy who was to succeed to the throne instead of their own boys. It is doubtful whether they could have felt kindly towards him in any case. Being what they were, both ambitious and unscrupulous, they did everything they could to ruin the boy. He was surrounded by persons who turned his thoughts towards subjects unfit for him, and who led him astray at an age when he should have been attending to his school-books. The sudden change from a life of convent-like severity to one of the greatest dissipation and licence was sufficient to turn the head of any young man, and much more so that of the heir-presumptive to a brilliant throne. When he appeared in a ballroom the women flattered him, not for position perhaps so much as for his youthful grace and manners. The

Archduke and his wife threw in the way of the Archduke people of vicious life, who did their best to ruin him in every way. The frivolity of his disposition, mingled with a certain light-heartedness that led him to take nothing seriously, saved him from these snares. The Archduke had him removed from the Vienna Court, where he was far too popular, on the pretext that he was "going the pace" too fast. The Emperor made inquiries, and discovered that the Archduke was leading a comparatively simple life compared with that of many of his elders. He was banished to his regiment garrisoned on the Elbe; however, he got frequent leave to come to Vienna *incognito*, when he could not interfere with his uncle, who was so unpopular that he never ventured to walk about the streets like the rest of the Imperial family. It is probable that, instead of lessening his popularity, these long periods of enforced absence endeared the young Archduke to the hearts of his future subjects. He, too, knew how to speak a number of languages and dialects. Italian he spoke like his native tongue, and he knew French, the diplomatic language of the Balkans, thoroughly. He knew Czech really well, and also spoke Hungarian, having learnt both languages as a child. The heir to

the throne knew neither, not having learnt them when young, as there were several lives between him and the throne. All these facts made him less inclined to love his nephew, who seemed to possess all the graces that he lacked. All the machinations against him, although actuated by the deepest hate, had no result because of his simplicity of character. When he returned to Vienna after a long, enforced absence, he went at once to the Belvedere and thanked his uncle and aunt for the kind care that held him far from the capital. He did not say that he had all the amusement that he needed. He had been present at every *première* of importance, assisted at many balls that did not figure in the columns of the papers devoted to Court news, and generally had an amusing time without being trammelled by the strict etiquette that would have regulated his movements had he been in the capital on an official visit. Always smiling and good-humoured, he never even noticed the machinations that were directed against him. He was high in favour with the Emperor, who often expressed the wish that the younger man were coming to the throne instead of the next heir, for Archduke Carl had never caused him a moment's uneasiness. This was saying much at a Court where most of the youth-



ARCHDUKE CARL FRANCIS JOSEPH.]



PRINCESS ZITA OF PARMA.

ful members had committed some breach of etiquette at least, many of them having caused the Emperor much trouble by their love affairs. Archduke Carl, instead of a variety of *affaires*, had offered all the warmth of his youthful devotion on the shrine of one of the most amusing and accomplished Vienna actresses. He carried flowers and flung them on the stage at her feet very often, and showed his preference in many ways. As the lady was already a woman far on in years, she accepted his boyish devotion without allowing him to do anything compromising for his future. She acted the *rôle* of the good fairy who saved the prince from all the snares spread for his undoing. When the Archduke fell in love with an old playmate at a Court ball, he made his actress friend his first *confidante*. The Archduke, like most of his relations, married solely for love, and was able to accomplish his desire, although there was much opposition in some quarters. Princess Zita, of Parma, the daughter of an old and decaying race, was a child of the Vienna Court. She had been convent-bred, and, like her husband, she was educated partly on English lines. She had spent some years at the convent at the Isle of Wight, where several of her near relatives occupy important positions among the Sisters.

She lives part of the year in Italy, and is essentially Italian in type and character. Her great charm of manner fitted her to become an Empress; the only objection that could be made to the match was that she came of a family of worn-out stock already related to the Habsburgs, and not likely to improve that degenerate line. This objection would have been considered fatal at some Courts. At Vienna the fact that Princess Zita was distinguished for her piety and was completely in the hands of the Church over-rode all other considerations, and the match was allowed to proceed. It has turned out most happily. The Viennese were pleased to have a Princess that they knew. They made no secret of the fact that it was a grave mistake to import princesses. They said that such young women did not know enough to hold their own against the intrigues of the family, who were invariably jealous of the "first lady at the Court." The women did their best to poison the young lives of imported princesses with tales of scandal and by other less reputable means. Princess Zita had a crowd of powerful relations to stand by her and protect her from the harm that befell the late Empress Elizabeth. She was well acquainted with the atmosphere of the Court,

and, like a child at home, knew how to avoid all the pitfalls spread for her undoing. Princess Zita accompanied her husband everywhere when it was possible. Before the war she travelled over the whole of the Galician frontier in his company. With deep understanding of the character of the peasants, she purchased their livestock at the exorbitant prices they demanded for her poultry farm. Unlike Duchess Hohenberg, who complained that she was overcharged when the peasants asked too much, she threw away sums of money, small intrinsically, but large in the eyes of the poor inhabitants of the land. The progress made by the newly-married pair was a great success. The birth of a son, while putting a seal upon the popularity of both, undid the hopes and plans nourished at the Belvedere. Duchess Hohenberg despaired of seeing either of her fine boys upon the throne. The remainder of the Court held a brief for Archduke Carl and Princess Zita, and protected them against Duchess Hohenberg. Little Zita had grown up among them, and no one grudged her the high place she occupied. She did not even displace the "first lady of the Court." Archduchess Annunziata, the niece of the Emperor, immediately resigned her place to the younger

woman who was to be the future Empress, but the little Princess was too much taken up by her duties as mother to learn the whole of the strict etiquette that the "first lady" is called upon to observe. Her aunt arranged, therefore, to preside at the more formal functions, where the Princess, who was nothing but a child, might make some dreadful mistake, and to instruct her gradually. This simplified matters greatly for the Princess, who thus made no enemies. Archduchess Annunziata had presided at the Court ever since the tragic death of Empress Elizabeth. She was tired of the burden, and wished to retire to her convent at Prague for the remainder of her life. She took no pleasure in standing erect and gracious on a platform at the top of the ballroom and saying the appropriate thing to each of the dignitaries presented to her notice. The *rôle* that would have rejoiced Duchess Hohenberg beyond everything annoyed her.

Archduke Francis Ferdinand and Duchess Hohenberg, sitting sullen and gloomy at Konopischt, still tried to keep the heir-presumptive far from the capital. He and Princess Zita were only allowed to show themselves publicly in Vienna on rare occasions. This led to their being cheered frantically whenever

they did show themselves. Exaggerated stories of the jealousy shown by the Archduke went all round the city. The Emperor frequently called the younger man to his side, and was struck by his modesty and mild demeanour. Archduke Carl was naturally most unassuming. His personal attendants were much attached to him because of his great generosity, but always said that he was impulsive to a degree that made him difficult to arrange for; he made plans absolutely upon the spur of the moment without stopping to consider.

Such was the young Archduke as he was known in Vienna when the murder of Sarajevo altered the entire course of his life. The weight of responsibility suddenly thrown upon his shoulders made him show character—strength of character that must have been there all the time, carefully concealed beneath the pleasant manners of a young courtier. This was seen at the funeral of the victims of Sarajevo. He insisted upon walking behind the funeral coach that bore his uncle and aunt to their last rest. The Master of the Ceremonies at the Vienna Court had arranged that no member of the House of Habsburg should demean himself by paying this respect to the dead, and he represented this to the Archduke

on the steps of the railway station. The Archduke became quite red in the face with excitement as he pointed out to the amazed official that he was now heir to the throne, and that he would decide upon what was the correct thing at Court. All Vienna saw and applauded. He walked alone behind the coffins as first mourner with the air of sadness and solemnity which the occasion demanded. At the same time he freed himself from the domination of the much-dreaded Master of the Ceremonies once and for all.

The Archduke and his wife were naturally pro-Italian. Even before his marriage the Archduke had always shown more sympathy for the Italians than was felt by other Habsburgs. The happiest days of his life had been spent on Italian ground at Viareggio, where he was able to live on the water far away from the Court and its exigencies. He was inclined to trust the Italians, and, unlike his uncle, disliked the Slavs. He was, too, decidedly pro-British before the war. When he was selected to go to England to represent the Emperor, he made his preparations with the greatest alacrity, pleased to think that he had been chosen for the mission.

Kaiser Wilhelm regarded the heir-presump-

tive to the throne as a young man of no importance in his schemes. He believed that a youth who was so thoroughly under the influence of his mother had neither the character nor the intelligence to oppose his plans. Kaiser Wilhelm, perhaps, neglected that obstinacy which is a leading characteristic of the Habsburgs, and which has enabled them to resist many an attack upon their prerogative in the past, and may have an important and unexpected influence on the future. While the late heir to the throne of Austria-Hungary was entirely in the hands of the Jesuits, neither Emperor Francis Joseph nor his present heir ever allowed them to dictate in affairs of State. They held that religion and statecraft were different matters that must be kept scrupulously apart.

CHAPTER XXII

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY FACED BY REVOLUTION OR WAR —THE FINANCIAL FACTOR

AUSTRIA and Hungary strike the casual visitor as very like any other European country, and so long as he remains on the beaten path he finds no reason to revise his judgment. Vienna, Budapesth, Prague, are very like Milan or Berlin. There is plenty of ready money, and every indication of a somewhat too advanced civilisation. In fact, decadence is suggested rather than under-cultivation. The ease with which the city people have adopted every new invention, and the facility with which they adapt themselves to modern appliances and conveniences, quite deceives the stranger. He naturally supposes that people who made constant and excellent use of the telephone at a time when it was just being introduced into the western countries of Europe are necessarily advanced in other matters. Everything looks very up to date. The fashionable watering-places,

like Karlsbad and Marienbad, are the essence of modernity. Everything is carefully arranged for the comfort of the traveller, and for the man who can afford the utmost refinement of comfort it is perfection. If he takes a long walk out from his splendidly appointed hotel, and spends a day or two up country in Bohemia, he will soon discover a different state of things.

The first shock is the knowledge that the forest is not safe for anyone who rashly wanders away from carefully tended paths and marked trees that show the direction. These immense woods are not merely unsafe, but any stranger to the district who strays among the denser parts will probably not return, for the peasants are inclined to be savage. If a German falls into the hands of Czechs in a small Bohemian town he usually gets badly mauled before the police, who are really in sympathy with the townspeople and do not hurry unduly, can interfere. This kind of outrage, which may be found chronicled without any excuse or explanation in the small local papers, goes on within a few miles of the ultra-civilised Marienbad, where urbane and polished politicians conferred with King Edward, and spoke of their land as one of the civilised countries of Europe. No one ever thought of pushing inquiries as to what the

native peasant was like. Horrible crimes are frequently reported from Bohemia, but they attract little attention. The foreigners do not read the kind of paper that delights in horrible detail, while the Viennese know too well how very backward much of the country population is, and naturally wish to keep the knowledge from the world. The various races that live within the confines of Austria proper are of mild and somewhat timid disposition, but the Hungarians are fierce and cruel.

Many peasants, who own considerable wealth in the shape of land, that has come down to them from their fathers, have never seen a gold coin, nor even possessed a 15s. banknote in their lives. Very little gold circulates in Austria or Hungary at any time, the people preferring notes. Apart from this, however, many peasants never handle money. Their whole business is carried on by barter. A peculiar method of trading is known as "pauschal." It is extremely simple in its operation. A dairy-farmer undertakes to supply one of his neighbours with butter, milk and eggs all the year round. The neighbour supplies him with pork, vegetables, or some other commodity that he has at his disposal. The same method of barter is applied to the shoemaker and to the weaver of

linen. If one party suffers a slight disadvantage through the arrangement it is considered that it will be made up another season, when his requirements will be larger. This system obviates any keeping of accounts, and is of great convenience, as it enables the parties concerned to forecast their expenses for the coming year with certainty. In some districts, where there is less mutual dependence, and therefore less mutual trust and confidence, the accounts are chalked up behind the door, and one supply of goods rendered against another. But no money passes from hand to hand. The peasant has a lively distrust of banks, born of experience; and he considers that the natural end of a bank is failure. He therefore invests his money in stock, in enriching the land, if he is the absolute proprietor, and always locks up a certain sum for emergencies, turning it into jewellery, which is worn by the women. In times of terror the peasant girl conceals her necklace—usually made of coins which are out of circulation—and always has the wherewithal to procure herself temporary shelter. The peasant women, too, wear belts of solid silver, which can be converted into cash at a moment's notice, should necessity arise. The peasant never interferes with his wife's jewellery, whatever may be his

need; it is her dowry for herself and her children in times of dire distress.

These circumstances and habits account for the curious phenomenon of a population rich in property, but having no ready money. This explains, too, the remarkable fact that only about 4 per cent. of the population of Austria pay income-tax. The tax is imposed upon everyone earning over £50 per annum. Moving about among the peasant proprietors, among the large population engaged in cottage industries, it is impossible to believe that these people are living on incomes below £50 per annum. It is true that they have no money, or only rare coins, but they are living at a high standard of comfort, and many who earn £20 per annum in actual coins, consume products got upon the exchange and barter system worth several hundreds of pounds.

The small fraction of the population which is taxed for income for carrying on a trade or profession, and in a dozen other vexatious ways, is heavily hampered. A man must even pay a heavy tax for the upkeep of his religion if he is a non-Catholic. Indeed, it is difficult to see how any business can be made to pay with the heavy taxation that hampers trade on every hand, and practically prevents Austrian traders

from being able to compete with German firms, which instead of being hampered are assisted by their Government.

In the days of quiet and calm before Austria-Hungary was led to think of world-empire by her ambitious ally, the Minister of Finance actually turned out budgets without a deficit; some years there was even a surplus. It was, of course, impossible to ascertain how far these figures corresponded with actual facts, for "double book-keeping" was not peculiar to private persons in Austria-Hungary. It was a matter of common knowledge that Government statistics were manipulated to suit the requirements of the political situation.

When the country embarked upon her new military and naval policy, large sums of money were needed. There were meetings between leading financiers to consider how best it could be collected from a country that possessed no liquid wealth. Taxes were clapped on imports. This brought but little revenue, as the country people fed on the products of their own growing. The various State monopolies, such as tobacco, brought in large revenues. The attempt to get money from the agricultural population, however, failed. This meant that the capitals and large manufacturing districts

must find the necessary funds for reckless expenditure on armaments. Great hardships resulted. The working-classes were forced to pay heavy taxes upon all goods entering the city. They already bore heavy import duties, and the cost of many articles of necessity was almost prohibitive. Sugar, which was made from beetroot in the country, and sold to England at less than cost price, in order to gain a foreign market, cost 5d. a pound in Austria-Hungary. The taxation became heavier every year, and the authorities failed to see that the burden was falling exclusively upon the middle-classes and the working-classes dwelling in the large cities. Austria-Hungary tried to float loans in France. The political situation was so strained that, although France was willing to lend money to Russia, she refused, point-blank, to lend to Austria or to Hungary on any terms. The loans had to be taken up in Germany. Germany needed money herself; she had been spending all her available capital upon raw material for the forging of cannon. At every meeting of the Austrian Parliament members protested against the laying down of Dreadnoughts when the financial situation of the country was so precarious. There were constant riots in the towns, the Austro-Hungarian

system of reckless suppression of disorders applied to quell the disorders only increased the mass of discontent and disaffection. There came a time when politicians began to see that only a successful war could save the position. The Hungarians were threatening to break loose from Austria. They considered that the finances were mismanaged. Too much of the money voted for the Dual Monarchy, and administered by the Common Minister of Finance, was devoted to Austrian needs, to the disadvantage and detriment of her less powerful neighbour, Hungary. Such suspicions were very well founded, especially as regards the sums secretly devoted to war material. If education were defective in Austria, it was still more neglected in Hungary.

Vienna had become the real capital, Budapesth being neglected through the ill-health and advancing age of the Emperor. It was clear that the Emperor could not travel to Budapesth without risk to his health, since the climate did not suit him.

Hungary said that she would prefer to administer her own finances. She could very well provide for her own military and naval requirements. She wished to take a part of the executive power into her own hands. This

would have weakened Austria considerably. Instead of ranking as a first-class Power she would fall to the rank of a secondary one. Bohemia, too, wished for separation. She felt that her *prosperous factories, her ironworks, were contributing a very large share of wealth to the country, and that while the Bohemians were heavily taxed, they got no compensation for the extra money that they poured into the State chest.

The leading statesmen realised towards the year 1912 that they were faced by the choice of war or revolution in Austria-Hungary. The huge sums needed to pay off the debts already incurred by the costs connected with two mobilisations, and the ever-increasing military and naval needs were landing the country in an *impasse* from which there were only two roads of escape. If the House of Habsburg wished to maintain its proud position some action must be taken. The politicians round the throne thought that a successful war with Italy would be the most desirable event. They dared not moot this question in the presence of the aged Emperor. He was firm for peace. This conviction, that was deeply rooted in his mind, was strengthened by his growing parsimoniousness. Very generous as a young man, he had grown

almost miserly as old age crept upon him. When he was ill he regretted that there should be speculation upon the Stock Exchange, and that the "poor people should lose their money," to use his own words. This economy, which he wished to see exercised, not only in his own private affairs, but throughout the State, would alone have made him abhor the thought of war, which he knew meant expenditure. The military party hoped that he might either die, or be brought to see that his remaining at the head of affairs any longer was a mistake from every point of view. They realised that something must be done. If the Emperor would only abdicate, they could act.

Prices of ordinary necessities rose 30 per cent. during the three years preceding the war. The small clerk, the officer, and everyone with a limited income and a certain position to keep up, was reduced to going without many articles of prime necessity, or to getting into debt. Many chose this last alternative; especially was this the case with the officers, who were thus the more anxious for war, as they had nothing to lose and much to gain by being on active service.

If the middle classes in Austria-Hungary had possessed large sums invested in stocks and shares, like the French or the Swiss, the large

class representing this interest would have objected to war. This was not the case, as all speculation and almost all liquid capital was in the hands of the Jews. They were firm for peace. They completely failed to see where the policy of the country was leading. Their lack of influence, and the barrier that kept them from being able to exchange views and opinions freely and as man to man with the aristocrats, prevented them from seeing what was about to happen. They believed that the country might go on in its peaceful way, even after the death of the Emperor, which was the date commonly fixed in the country for the disruption of the Empire. Perhaps the Jews and the financial section would have been right in their estimate had it not been for the ambitions of the German Kaiser. They did not appreciate the mentality of the Austrian Imperial family, in whom the power of decision was really vested, and could not understand that it would prefer to allow itself to become the cat-paw of Germany, rather than see its power diminished by the loss of part of its lands.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN CONSTITUTION

THE Austro-Hungarian Constitution exists on paper, but that is all. The Austrian Parliament met at Vienna, the Hungarian Parliament still meets at Budapesth, but the National Assemblies never exercised any actual power. This was partly due to the clever management of those in authority, but chiefly to the policy of the Emperor, an old autocrat, who considered that all means were justifiable if all real power could be kept in his hands. Much of the blame, however, was due to the people themselves, who held aloof from politics. Some of the most highly educated men in the country said that the Constitution was a farce, and that they refused to have anything to do with it. Others refused to vote to mark their disapprobation. The Government thereupon made voting obligatory. Anyone who refused to record his vote without due cause was liable to

fine and imprisonment. Thus the Government kept up the farce of a constitutional system.

Reflecting people of all nationalities within the Dual Monarchy realised that the people had no power. All decisions in the realm of the foreign policy of the country were made by the reigning monarch. No Minister was held responsible. The power of voting money for the army and navy and all objects common to Austria and Hungary was not invested in the Parliaments, but held by the Delegations. The Delegates were elected by the Parliaments, but the nominations were made by Government, and men noted for their pliability were selected. Delegates sometimes protested against expenditure. An instance of this kind occurred when Austria-Hungary embarked upon her big fleet policy. Money was asked for to build Dreadnoughts. The Delegations refused.

The Government did not give up its project. It gave orders to the Stabilimento Tecnico in Trieste to lay down the first ship "on spec.," with a very broad hint as to who would purchase the vessel when complete. This dishonesty, first towards the taxpayers, then towards Europe, is a particularly striking sample of the policy carried on by the country.

Members of Parliament in both Austria and

Hungary received payment for each day's attendance. When Parliament was dissolved this payment ceased. The members were, for the most part, men who required the money to live. They had given up their profession to come to Vienna to represent their constituencies, and the closing of Parliament meant the cutting off of their incomes. It was therefore to their interest to do nothing to anger the Government. The laws of the Constitution provided for the election of another Parliament, but in actual practice it remained shut until it pleased the Emperor to permit another election to take place. Persons of importance did not seek election to the "Punch and Judy" show or madhouse on the Ringstrasse, as the Austrian Parliament was usually called.

A stormy sitting at the Vienna Parliament was an interesting sight. A cordon of police usually guarded the stately block of buildings when a row was going on within. From time to time a side door would open and angry attendants would throw out a dozen men, panting from the struggle. They would fall on the soft carpet of snow, and then be sent about their business by the police beyond. They were the public who had been sitting in the gallery and who had joined too loudly in the demonstra-

tions going on below. Inside the atmosphere was thick. The Parliament had been sitting for two days and nights unceasingly. The Czechs, who wished to obstruct the passing of a Bill, had been behaving like buffoons. They rattled their desks and banged the lids to drown the speaker's voice. They brought all kinds of noisy instruments to disturb the deliberations. Rain-machines, used in theatres to imitate the sound of rain on the roofs, were rattled; other members blew upon trumpets and penny whistles. Czechs of huge build spoke for ten hours at a time. Friends supplied them with water and chocolate while they carried on their obstruction. At night the Opposition slept in the passages upon mattresses. Rolled in top-coats, they were ready to swarm in whenever their services were required at a moment's notice. The attendants smiled at the heaps of bodies lying prone, but ready to fight. The floor of the Parliament was untidy. Balls of paper soaked in ink that had been flung at an opponent or at the President were seen on the floor. All kinds of missiles lay thick, for the attendants, careful of their personal safety, had not ventured to pick them up. It was difficult to realise that the Austrian Parliament was not a third-rate tavern.

Year after year the Parliament spent the precious hours that should have been given to making its voice heard in the country to this kind of foolishness. The Opposition, instead of securing a majority, always hoped to delay business and thus secure concessions that the majority was unwilling to grant. They did not see that they were playing the game of the Central Administration, which rejoiced to see them making themselves ridiculous and losing such influence as they possessed by virtue of their office.

In Hungary things were worse than in Austria. The elections were nothing more than a farce. There was no secret ballot. Votes were openly bought and sold. When the Government could not secure a majority for its candidate, soldiers were used to keep the Opposition voters from the booths. The Hungarians clamoured for general suffrage and the removal of the property qualification, which kept the election in the hands of a few men, but they asked in vain. Their country districts were represented by Government candidates, and even in the towns it was seldom that an independent candidate of any standing got in.

The disorders were even worse than in the Vienna Parliament. The President, Count

Tisza, thought nothing of clearing the House with soldiers, and had the members chased into the street at the point of the bayonet. The members were constantly sending challenges and fighting duels among themselves instead of attending to business.

The Government delegated large powers to the local Diets, which decided questions of expenditure, and, upon the whole, acquitted themselves of their tasks in a very satisfactory manner. Unfortunately, much of the money that was granted for local purposes remained unspent, as the permission required for liquidating the sums did not come from the Central Government. If a road were required for military purposes or a railway needed for the transport of troops, the Central Government made a handsome contribution to the cost; if it were simply required for the development of the country generally, the project was not encouraged. When the Diets ventured into the realms of politics they were promptly informed that they must keep within the limits of their own jurisdiction.

The central authorities in Vienna and Budapesth had for years followed a policy of blinding the people; they had encouraged frivolity in every form. Everything was done to turn

people's minds from serious subjects to pleasure and enjoyment. The reputation enjoyed by both Vienna and Budapesth as the gayest capitals in Europe was fully deserved. The intellectual classes were completely hoodwinked, and had no idea of what was really going on, either at home or abroad. The same results were accomplished in the country by keeping the people in ignorance and withholding education from them. While much money was spent on the education of Germans and Magyars, the ruling races, great economy was practised towards the Slavs. The powerful Bohemians managed to secure education for their children, and the Government statistics show that 100 per cent. of the children of school age in Bohemia actually were in attendance at school in 1906. In Galicia only 85 per cent. are reported as in attendance; while in Croatia 68 per cent. went to school, and in Bosnia and Herzegowina only 14 per cent. In every case the local authorities were forced to provide education for the children, unless they lived on isolated farms where it was really impossible. The Government, however, refused its grants wherever it could, as the money was needed for purposes which did not appear in the Budget. The Slavs and Croats protested bitterly against

a system which inflicted upon them heavy taxes, mostly indirect, and kept the benefits for the ruling races. This maladministration was one of the chief causes of the continual unrest among the subject-peoples.

The Emperor, and indeed all the members of the Imperial family, lived in an atmosphere apart. They never considered whither their policy was leading, nor that the system of suppression could not be carried on indefinitely at this period of history. Most of the men in power would have shone in the Middle Ages; they were useless and impracticable now that commercial travellers have taken the places of knights-errant and trade is more important than armaments. They did not realise that in suppressing progress they were handicapping the country in its race for commercial supremacy and preventing its being able to compete with Germany at home and abroad. In their fear of the "people" getting to the fore, they neglected the foe beyond the frontier.

CHAPTER XXIV

WHO MURDERED THE ARCHDUKE?

THE constant friction between Emperor Francis Joseph and his heir was always increased when the autumn manœuvres came round. The Emperor, who was over eighty, wished to attend them, and on two occasions they had to be put off, as the doctors said that the monarch could not spend his nights sleeping in a tent. Archduke Francis Ferdinand was always too ready to take up the duties which would have been performed by the Emperor had he been younger. Thus the hatred between the reigning monarch and his heir increased every year. The Emperor was prepared to allow his heir a large sum of money if he would consent to resign his right to the throne. This was not because of his personal antipathy. The doctors who attended the Arch-

duke said that he was not entirely responsible for his actions. They suspected that he had an abscess on the brain. He had committed hasty, ill-considered actions that could be pardoned in an Archduke, but that were not possible for an Emperor, who must always keep his temper. The Imperial family dreaded the time of his coming to the throne. They had notified the Emperor that they would withdraw from the Court if Duchess Hohenberg were made Empress. At that epoch no one doubted that the Archduke would create her Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary on his accession.

The manœuvres in Bosnia—arranged to take place there because the peoples of the newly-annexed provinces had been somewhat restless—were about to take place. Archduke Francis Ferdinand decided to assist. His wife said that she would accompany him. The Emperor was very angry. He did not wish the Archduke to go to Bosnia. He was much too unpopular to take such a risk. When Emperor Francis Joseph heard that Duchess Hohenberg was to accompany her husband, his wrath knew no bounds. The ladies of the Imperial family never accompanied their husbands on such occasions. If the Archduke and his wife went

to Bosnia she would be received as the future Empress of Austria. The Emperor forbade him to take her. The Archduke insisted. If there was any danger, his wife, who was really courageous, would wish to be at his side. The Emperor, who was very jealous about his authority, was extremely angry. It is very probable that he did not hide his feelings from his near relations.

The next news that reached Vienna was that the Archduke and his wife had been assassinated at Sarajevo. The crime was committed on a Sunday. It was midsummer in Vienna, and, strange to say, every important personage was on the spot. As a rule, the official personages left Vienna on the Saturday, when there were two consecutive holidays, as in this case, the Monday being a *fête*-day, and spent the week-end at the Semmering. On this particular occasion everyone was in Vienna. The Emperor was at Ischl. The telegram with the news was sent there first. He exclaimed, "What impertinence of those Bosnians !" but was not otherwise moved.

The official account of the assassination, which was full of discrepancies, was then sent to Vienna. According to this account, a bomb had been thrown at the Archduke and his wife

on their way to the Sarajevo town-hall. It had failed to kill them. The Archduke, little moved by the occurrence, merely taunted the Mayor of Sarajevo with the lack of courtesy that the people had shown. "Instead of presenting us with bouquets, you receive us with bombs." The Archduke could afford to make merry over his escape. He naturally expected that the streets had been cleared of people during his long visit to the town-hall. It was a matter of elementary precaution. The Bosnian police, however, had received instructions from Vienna that the Archduke's safety was to be left in the hands of the military. The Archduke and his wife entered the car. The driver started off. He was in the plot. He drove them right across the road to where the murderer was waiting. This meant running the car on the wrong side of the road. Everyone noticed this, but no one protested. No one seized the assassin after he had fired at the Archduke's head. He had ample time to kill the wife too. The boy, too, knew a secret that was carefully kept in the Imperial family. Archduke Francis Ferdinand was wearing armour. For this reason the assassins tried to kill him with a bomb. This attempt having failed, the assassin fired at his head

instead of at his breast. Both Kaiser Wilhelm and Archduke Francis Ferdinand spent much time and thought in trying to find bullet-proof armour. At the time of the assassination the Archduke was wearing a silken vest an inch thick. It was woven obliquely—made on the same principle as the jackets used for automobile tyres. It was warranted to turn the point of a knife or bullet. The vest was cumbersome and somewhat warm. It gave the Archduke an appearance of extreme stoutness. He, however, knowing how intensely he was hated in Austria and Hungary, never cared to appear in public without some protective armour. Steel corselets were excellent in bygone days, but are no use against a modern rifle. The Archduke feared he might be shot from a window. The secret that the Archduke was wearing armour was known to half-a-dozen people at most. The assassin must have learnt it from a member of the Imperial family.

A number of reporters started for Sarajevo that night to find out what had really happened there on that dark Sunday. They were turned back by the police. All letters from individuals in Sarajevo were censored. The telegraphic service was suspended. The police

were never even reprimanded for allowing the heir to the throne to be assassinated. On the contrary, the heads of the force were promoted shortly afterwards.

In Vienna the news was received with ill-concealed satisfaction. Everyone, from Archduke to crossing-sweeper, feared the day of his coming to power. The story went out to the world that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had been killed by Serbs. This was not true. The young men concerned in the conspiracy were Bosnians, and Austrian subjects. The Government, however, saw that there was a chance of forcing a war upon Serbia. If Austria could only prove that Serbia had been responsible for the crime, she could undertake her long-planned "vengeance promenade" to Belgrade with the assurance that Europe would not interfere. Statesmen anticipated no difficulty in fastening the guilt on Serbia, as the murders of King Alexander and Queen Draga were not forgotten. Austria, however, forgot her own black record. Emperor Maximilian of Mexico had been shot. It was always felt that more might have been done by his own family for his safety. Empress Elizabeth had been assassinated at Geneva. Her decease was most convenient. The

country was wearied of hearing of the pilgrimage of the heartbroken woman through Europe. Crown Prince Rudolf, who was much too popular, had also been murdered mysteriously. The persons concerned in his death had all been exiled. They had been sent to South America, but pensions sufficient to keep them in luxury for the rest of their lives had been bestowed upon them. These riches were only held on condition that the fearful night at the lonely hunting-box near Vienna was never mentioned. Emperor Francis Joseph had thus lost his three nearest relatives by assassination.

The news of the Archduke's assassination was only discussed in whispers in Vienna. Everyone was afraid of arrest. Nevertheless, no one thought of accusing Serbia. Archduke Francis Ferdinand was the one man in all the country who favoured the Slavs. His wife's influence would secure advancement at Court for every man with Slavonic blood in his veins. The Germans feared that they would be overrun with them. While Austrians and Hungarians generally detested the Archduke, the Slavs loved him devotedly. It was clear that neither the Austrian Slavs nor Serbia had any interest in the Archduke's death. They had everything to lose.

The Imperial family was most anxious for his death. Archduke Frederick had never forgotten the slight put upon his daughter.

The assassin had definite instructions to murder the Duchess Hohenberg. Such orders could only come from persons actuated by motives of personal hatred. No one else in the world desired her death. Women, especially aristocrats and the mothers of families, are held in great veneration in Slav countries. It is certain that had the Bosnians arranged the plot, the Archduke would have been shot, but the morganatic wife spared. She was not even a member of the Imperial family. Why should she be sacrificed?

The remains of the Archduke and his wife were brought to Vienna. The Austrians, a Catholic people, and accustomed to exaggerated respect being paid to the dead, were deeply shocked at the funeral arrangements. The Imperial family wished that every possible insult should be shown to the remains of the defunct lady-in-waiting.

Italians living in Trieste describe with horror the landing of the coffins, which were brought from Bosnia by sea. They had no cause to love the Archduke, but were outraged by the disrespect to the dead. The sailors who carried

them from the ship let one coffin drop upon the quay through carelessness. It lay there until they had taken breath and felt inclined to resume their burden. The funeral arrangements in Vienna were of a very third-class order. The Austrians said: "The Imperial family has no respect—not even for death. Their hate pursues its victims beyond the tomb." The city was filled with reports of unseemly disputes about the funeral arrangements. The Imperial family wished to separate the pair of lovers, who had been so loyal to each other in life, and bury them separately. It was an outrage, they said, that any Habsburg should walk behind the coffin of a morganatic wife. Finally, it was arranged that the coffins should lie in state side by side in the Hofburg Chapel. The Chapelle Ardente was poorly fitted; trappings for a third-class funeral were used. The military party in Austria-Hungary was indignant that such an insult should be put on a soldier. Old men, dressed in their uniforms ablaze with Orders and military decorations, entered the sombre chapel, which was not even properly supplied with candles. Bursting with indignation and rage, they knelt and said a short prayer for the dead. The deep-toned mutterings sounded more like cries for vengeance.

ance than prayers for the souls of the departed. Bohemian nobles came into the chapel. They glared at the unseemly sight. Everything was poverty-stricken.

Early in the morning a huge crowd had gathered to take part in the procession in front of the coffins. Every Austro-Hungarian subject has the right to see the face of the deceased monarch or of the heir to the throne after death. The Archduke's coffin was sealed down. His face could not be exposed; his head had been so disfigured. But, nevertheless, the Ringstrasse was filled with people. They were permitted to enter the chapel in single file. The police on the great Ringstrasse sent many home, assuring them that their turn to enter the Hofburg would never be reached. This show of popular sympathy had enraged the Court. When the funeral procession was on its way to the station in Vienna after the lying-in-state, an unrehearsed incident took place. A large number of Bohemian aristocrats, with Prince Max Egon Fürstenburg at their head, assembled in one of the squares. They were either in costume or uniform, and were wearing the arms that belonged to their rank—short daggers, for the most part. They walked bareheaded behind the funeral as chief mourners to show their

respect to Duchess Hohenberg, a member of the Bohemian aristocracy, and their resentment at the insults that had been heaped upon her head. Who were the proud Habsburgs to treat a Bohemian and a woman in such a way? Their whole attitude was not one of mourning, but of protest.

The final scenes took place at Arstatten, beyond the Danube. They were disgraceful beyond anything that had happened before. A violent storm forced the funeral *cortège* to take refuge in an inn. The mutes became offensively drunk. Ghastly stories of the coffins being knocked off the chairs that were supporting them were circulated in Vienna. These may have been exaggerated. There was, however, some truth in the tales of impiety.

There was no one responsible in charge of the funeral. This was extraordinary, as the most unimportant Court ceremonies are always managed by experts long trained to do the right thing. Nothing is left to chance or accident. But the Archduke, the heir to the throne, was buried with less respect than would have been shown to an employé in the Court service had he died that week.

CHAPTER XXV

WHY GERMANY DECIDED UPON WAR

AUSTRIA-HUNGARY had long been anxious to go to war. She had been straining at the leash for years. The peaceful issue to the Annexion crisis had not pleased Austrian statesmen. They were still less satisfied at the check put upon their aggressive plans at the time of the signing of the Treaty of Bucharest. In the first instance, the credit of preserving peace was entirely due to Germany. She was not ready. On the second occasion, Italy's refusal to fight against the Serbs or to stand by Austria in an aggressive war was probably the decisive factor, for then Germany was ready, and only waiting for a good pretext to break the peace of Europe.

When Kaiser Wilhelm heard of the assassination at Sarajevo he immediately saw that the chance so long sought had come. Such an opportunity would never occur again. But he knew that he must play his cards with skill.

The Emperor of Austria would be delighted at a chance of punishing Servia, for her statesmen, who felt secure under the protection of Russia, had used expressions in parleying with Austria that irritated the aged Emperor. He could not brook that small Balkan States of very recent growth should place themselves on a level with the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His councillors succeeded in making him believe that the Serbs were responsible for the crime of Sarajevo. The aged Emperor, perhaps, had some suspicion of the truth. He did not want to know it, however. Providence had intervened and removed an obnoxious personage, and had at the same time given Austria a chance of thrashing Servia. The Emperor considered that the thrashing was long overdue. Why should he, the faithful son of the Church, inquire too closely into events that had fallen out so propitiously? The Emperor, however, only wished to send a punitive expedition to Belgrade. Gunboats could bombard the capital from the Danube, and Austria's honour would be satisfied. The Emperor in no wise wished for a war with Russia. Apart from other considerations, he was bound in honour not to seek a quarrel with the "peace" Czar. When the Annexation crisis was at its

height, Emperor Francis Joseph sent Prince Hohenlohe to St. Petersburg with an autograph letter, begging the Czar to allow him to end his days in peace. The terms in which this document was couched made it almost impossible for Austria to seek war with Russia so long as Emperor Francis Joseph was at the head of affairs. It was a breach of the honour that reigns among monarchs, for the appeal had been made as from a brother-sovereign. Kaiser Wilhelm was aware of this. But he was ready to stoop to any crime to accomplish his object. He and his councillors decided that the aged man at Schönbrunn could be deceived. He must think that the war would be merely a local affair. The Austrians, too, were longing to show their prowess against Servia, but a war with Russia would not be popular either in Austria or Hungary. It is doubtful whether any Austro-Hungarian statesman who understood the situation would have consented to acts that must inevitably lead to a European war. The idea of a series of small wars, first against Italy and then against the mutinous Balkan States, was favoured in Vienna. Kaiser Wilhelm had a singular talent for discovering unscrupulous men. The German Ambassador in Vienna, Count Tchirsky, was a complete tool in the

hands of the Kaiser. He did not hesitate to lie to Count Tisza when occasion occurred. Count Tisza is a man of peculiar loyalty, and he could not understand utter unscrupulousness in another. Moreover, like all aristocrats, he was at a disadvantage in dealing with Germans, as he was a gentleman and his opponents were not. He was always at Budapesth, and therefore had no chance of watching the machinations employed by the Germans in Vienna. With Count Berchtold the German Ambassador had an easy task. The Count did not take things seriously, and fell into the toils spread for him by German statesmen. He really believed that the Emperor was an old man in his dotage, and neglected the other side of his character. In spite of his age and weakness, the Emperor Francis Joseph had enjoyed a unique experience as the oldest reigning monarch in Europe, and was able through this to judge of any question with an acumen exhibited by few politicians.

Germany decided that the moment for letting a European war break loose had come, and her reasons for this decision were weighty. The most important of all was the "Slav danger," as it was generally called in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Twenty years ago the German

family averaged sixteen to eighteen children. In Austria, too, large families had been the rule. The Magyars in Hungary still boasted big families, but the cancer that had bitten into German social life was beginning to be seen there, too. The one-child family had become the fashion in Germany. The mode was adopted by the Germans in Austria. Statesmen scolded, and proposed to tax bachelors and childless couples. But they were unable to stop the terrifying decrease in the population. Meanwhile, the Slavonic races in both Germany and Austria and Hungary multiplied very rapidly. Military men complained that regiments, officers and men, were composed entirely of Slavs, because there were not sufficient Austro-Germans or Magyars. It was impossible to enter a room where men of purely German extraction had assembled without hearing of this "Slav danger," which hung like a nightmare over the ruling races in Germany. Austria and Hungary saw their preponderance threatened. They doctored statistics to hide the truth. This was of little use. The Slav type was unmistakable. Slavs did not care to intermarry with Germans, and the race remained purely Slavonic, although Serbs and Czechs often intermarried. A war would afford an op-

portunity of reducing the Slav population. The military authorities had arranged to place the regiments composed of subject-races in the front of the battle so that they might be killed off. In 1914 leading men in both Germany and Austria-Hungary considered that war was inevitable within the next five years if they were to retain their supremacy.

The financial factor, too, was largely responsible for hastening the date of the war. Large sums had been spent on armaments in both Germany and Austria-Hungary far beyond the capacity of either country. Taxation had risen imperceptibly, and with it the cost of living. This had affected the middle classes. It is doubtful whether the families of officials in State employ and army officers ever got a really satisfactory meal in the last years of preparation. Men dressed in gorgeous uniforms, and with Orders and decorations that showed their rank, walked about the streets gaunt and hungry-looking.

People said, "This cannot go on." Statesmen saw that it would be revolution or war. Austria was faced with bankruptcy unless she could fight a successful war which would open fresh regions for exploitation and relieve her of her surplus Slavs.

Undue importance was attached to news of unrest in Great Britain, both in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Spies, men who were only too ready to believe that Britain was at her last gasp, brought back reports that a revolution was about to break out. The Irish question was misunderstood. The greed and hate that had been nurtured in every German heart prevented the spy from exercising any judgment, while the statesmen who should have controlled their reports had also lost their usual faculty of calm judgment in the bitterness of their hate. The woman question, which was seen in its ugliest aspects abroad, made the Germans realise that there was something wrong. Why were they so discontented? What had been done to render them so bitter? The question was asked in the Press and in public, and no explanation was forthcoming.

Jews who travelled throughout Europe on business brought back evil reports of conditions in England. They said that they had searched the length and breadth of the land for a capable business man to push their interests. They had returned from their quest unsatisfied. Germans and Austrians who had resided in England explained this by saying that all the better elements in the country had emigrated long ago.

Men could find no work unless they had influence. These facts were confirmed by observation, and undue importance was attached to them, single examples being too hastily accepted as indicative of the general state of things.

The preference shown by English business men for German clerks was regarded as another proof that the English were "a back number."

If Britain were degenerating, Russia was on the up-grade. She was arming. She was reforming her public offices. Large loans had been contracted, and she was about to build railways to the frontier. The Austro-Russian front in Galicia bristled with fortresses. Every week brought news of some new fortifications, made either on the Austrian or the Russian side. The Slav peoples in the Balkans were also on the up-grade. Everywhere the Germans saw themselves surrounded by Slavs, who were educating and improving themselves.

Meanwhile, not only the German people, but the German army, was deteriorating. Nasty stories, like *The Small Garrison*, were being written, describing life in small garrison towns. The Austrian and Hungarian officers were also suffering from the corrupt life which they led.

It was very uncertain whether they would have the necessary nerve to take the initiative at a crisis. Kaiser Wilhelm saw that the time was not far distant when his officers would be as bad as the Austrians. It was bad policy to wait until the growing evil that had corrupted the Austro-Hungarian army had infected his own.

CHAPTER XXVI

DIPLOMATIC METHODS : A COMPARISON

DIPLOMACY had succeeded in keeping the peace on two former occasions. In Western Europe it was believed that it would be successful again. Austria's intention of going to war was not regarded as serious. The European financier especially could not bring himself to believe in war. Some of the ablest men in Europe sat in the open-air café on the Ringstrasse, unable to close an eye in sleep for fear that they should miss news of supreme importance and not be there to "cover" at the critical moment. At two in the morning the great houses on either side of the street shook as the motors carrying the big guns rumbled past the café. They were taken off at dead of night and deposited on the low-lying ground near the Danube. Next morning the great gun was taken to pieces. One half of the immense

engine of destruction was slung on big hooks on a frame made for the purpose. It looked like a great hollow cradle that would have provided sleeping accommodation for a couple of men as it swirled and rocked when the train took a steep gradient. "Why have they brought out their big guns, which are so difficult to transport on the steep gradients in this mountainous country, if they do not mean business?" "Merely to frighten Servia and cow her into submission." "Then why is everything being done so secretly?" "Merely to heighten the effect," was the reply. Foreign diplomacy was not so blind, but it sat tight, and refused to give any opinion.

The State controls the railways in Austro-Hungary, excepting for one or two lines. The great termini in Vienna lie at different ends of the city. Ordinary passengers had to cross the town in cabs. The Orient express, however, was allowed to make use of the military communication railway to save time. This circular railway joined up all the big junctions. It had been constructed for purely military purposes to pass troops and munitions from one station to the other quickly and secretly. In solitary places, sidings, with an iron pontoon for heavy guns, and perhaps an immense crane, stood

moss-grown and idle. They were ready against the great day when Austria would go to war. The chief preparations were made in the Prater, an Imperial park that had been thrown open to the public many years before. In the waste swamp-land behind the park, which stretched down to the main stream of the Danube, there were cranes used for unloading barges that came up the river from the Balkans, and that also served for the mobilisation. Just beyond this ground there was a café much frequented by the diplomatists of Vienna. Close by was the British Golf Club.. The café had, no doubt, come into fashion because the chiefs of the Diplomatic Service in Austria congregated there to meet military men, who took their morning ride, where they could supervise the training of recruits, in the waste land beyond. But the position of the golf ground needed explanation. Who had chosen to plump the course right in the midst of the probable scene of any military preparation?

No answer will ever be made to this question. The British diplomatist, when he has a streak of Celtic blood in his make-up, is undoubtedly the finest in the world. He has the great gift of silence. Other men of great repute and long training always envy the Englishman his im-

perturbable face, which serves him as a complete mask. Nothing provokes him into a display of emotion; his habitual calm prevents the enemy ever surprising him into a betrayal of his country's secrets by a smile or a grimace. This is a unique gift. The secret police in every city of Europe will tell you that there is no catching an Englishman off his guard. His news is always sound. He does not care for information from doubtful sources; he misdoubts the foreigner and all his ways. He takes endless trouble in following up clues, but will not venture to draw conclusions. He is careful never to compromise himself by employing unworthy tools, and is never in "trouble" with the authorities or under suspicion like other diplomatists.

Unfortunately, there are always too few of him. He is hampered by having no residents in the British colony that he can consult. The first years of a diplomatist's life in a foreign country are occupied in learning the lie of the land. Until he is acquainted with the rudiments of the language and the significance of the utterances of the different papers, he can do no useful work.

The German diplomatist, a man without a vestige of imagination, ignorant of the very

first rules of diplomacy, unaware of the meaning of delicacy in his conduct as the guest of a foreign monarch, nevertheless frequently contrives to defeat his opponents. Why is this? How is it done? The German would be incapable of producing the results that he has been able to show were it not for the powerful "hand behind the throne." Diplomats at a Court like Vienna must be noblemen, and it is a matter of general knowledge that German aristocrats are not astute as a general rule. They have no conception of anything beyond the obvious. Hints and allusions are quite thrown away upon them. Now a diplomatist must be a man of very delicate perceptions. It may be safely said that such a thing does not exist in Germany. The Prussian especially is very obtuse. The Germans possess one great virtue. They are aware of their deficiencies. The diplomatist, who feels he is lacking in all the essential qualities of a politician, takes a partner—a very active partner, who is never seen or heard, but, none the less, is responsible for much of the work. He is a Jew, who manages the whole organisation of the work. He finances the diplomatist. German diplomatists are not paid much in proportion to the show that they are expected to make.

Everything is "solid," but nothing more. The Government, however, authorises an almost unlimited expenses account. This money is not squandered. Much is spent in the form of tips to persons who may be of use. No other diplomatist could venture to pay small sums of money to all sorts of doubtful persons in the first years of his residence at a foreign Court. Such persons might be, and probably are, spies of the Government, or members of the secret police. The German diplomatist is not troubled with these doubts. On entering his embassy he finds a record of all the work, clean and unclean, done by his predecessors, and the financial man, who has been in the post for years, in charge. Every successful means of getting information is suggested to him. He thus gets the benefit of the experience of his predecessors, avoids their mistakes, and improves on their methods, as every new man can. No German nobleman could carry on this business unaided. The Jew is a man of business, *par excellence*. His principle is, "Never take anything without paying for it." He not only pays for any little service rendered, delicately considering the feelings of the recipient, and where gold would give offence he sees that an order, or, perhaps, a

much-coveted title is bestowed, but he always makes sure that the recipient is satisfied. A Jew, concerned in statecraft, will never allow a tool, however humble, to go away discontented, for if he did he would have made him a dangerous enemy, instead of a grateful servant.

A young diplomatist starting for the Balkans will carry a set of instructions which regulate his every act in everyday life. "Put up at the ——— Hotel." "Give the waiter at the ——— restaurant a big tip . . . not sufficient to excite suspicion, but enough to render him communicative." "Find means of getting to know the big German manufacturer at ——— without being seen with him too much." "Cultivate the men connected with travel bureaux as much as possible without compromising your position." Imagine a young Englishman told off to cultivate men behind a counter! But the proud German will make any sacrifice, willingly, and, indeed, counts it no loss, for he is never a snob. Snobbism is unknown in either Germany or Austria-Hungary. Diplomats are always born within the magic circle. They are always men belonging to families admitted to Court functions. This means an ancient family. Persons outside this circle are not regarded as equals. Far from it. They are so

far removed from the nobility that they are looked upon as people of different flesh and blood. The German aristocrat thinks of the commoner somewhat as the Spaniard of the Southern States regards a nigger. But just because he condescends, he is very polite. The poor commoner must not guess his feelings. He can treat him as a friend and a brother without any risk of suffering loss of caste in the eyes of his peers. Where comparison is impossible there is no fear of his losing rank by associating with men of a different mould.

The young Englishman might speak in the street to a prominent fellow-countryman engaged in trade. Never, however, would he condescend to sit down at one table with his vulgar wife, and thus make a willing slave of him for ever. The Jew, watching the steps of the new diplomatists, is very careful to ascertain that any favour conferred will be accepted with gratitude, otherwise it is never offered.

The German diplomatist always speaks a number of languages, sometimes with a slight accent, sometimes like a native. He learnt them in the nursery. The British diplomatist usually speaks the language of the country to which he is accredited more or less fluently, but he seldom knows a second language. French is

the language of the Balkans. But the variety spoken is very unlike pure Parisian. It is only possible to converse with Albanian princes, Turkish pashas, Rumanians, and other people from the south if one's knowledge of French is very exact. Fluency in French makes intercourse with Italians and Russians easy, as they all speak it. A man who has business in the South or in the Tyrol should also speak Italian. The people there know German as well as Italian, but dislike speaking it. They feel mistrust towards anyone who uses the tongue of the oppressor. Besides they do not care to discuss politics or give information of any kind in a language that every spy or would-be spy within hearing can understand. No commercial traveller would start off without a thorough knowledge of the languages prevalent in the country in which he was to do business, but there is a great laxity of views in regard to the standard of linguistic talent required in the diplomatist.

The members of Embassies and Legations of the British Empire are, for the most part, purely British. Any strain of foreign blood impairs their usefulness to such an extent that this is well. The foreign politicians who deal with members of the Diplomatic Corps naturally

mistrust any half-breeds, as they call them. They prefer to have to deal with a prospective enemy who declares his feelings openly, rather than to be obliged to negotiate with the son of a German mother, who may be secretly inclined to favour his mother's race and make concessions that will not be ratified by the home Government.

If the British Diplomatic Service is unique in its special line because it is homogeneous, the men being all of the same type as their *confrères* in the Home Office or War Office at home, the same cannot be said for the Consular Service, which, especially in remote parts of Europe, is of but small or no benefit to Britain, while it has been of immense advantage to her rivals in trade. In cases where there is a genuine Briton at the head of affairs, he naturally takes a British view of all disputes that come along and form his daily work. But he is a startling exception. Most of the men in the Consular Service were Germans or natives; they gave their services for nothing, saying that the title lent them importance. It did. It enabled them to interfere in the thousand and one difficulties that are always arising between shippers and the Government—their own Government—and to place the British case

in a bad light. The shipper, not knowing the language, was quite helpless, and went back home the poorer in cash and disheartened. His owners were annoyed, and decided that they would cease to carry on dealings with the country in question. A German firm was quite ready to rush in to benefit by the facts which the consul had carefully ascertained during the negotiations, and snap up the trade. The German consul usually gave away large sums of money among the indigent in the British colony, and thus placed himself in a position that was very difficult to assail. If any powerful resident felt that the consul was not acting altogether in British interests, the latest subscription, probably a princely donation to some British charity, caused him to revise his hasty judgment. A man so truly charitable could not be guilty of meannesses such as he had suspected. He did not realise that the consul put the thumping big subscription down in his expenses account, entered as "Money to blind British residents." The British merchant prince, perhaps, did not care to assist some poor countryman; he left it to the consul, who took the money ostensibly from his own pocket, and the Englishman, ashamed at his niggardliness, felt that his mouth was effectually shut,

even when he was more than doubtful about some action taken with regard to his country's interests. These things happened in many places, and led British subjects living abroad to regard justice and law as non-existent so far as they were concerned. They were forced to have resort to all kinds of subterfuges to obtain the most elementary rights. They avoided litigation at any cost, for they knew that with a German consul it could only go against them. Old residents who knew the language and customs of the country were able to carry on business even in the German strongholds, for, after all, the Englishman is the best business man in the world. But they had to work at a disadvantage. Germans stood ready to take up the trade should the creator of the connection be ill or die. And the resident consul was always ready to replace the Englishman by his own man.

In places where there was a British consul all this was different. The authorities, feeling that a strong hand would protect British subjects, hesitated to attack any one of them without due cause. In these cities the British subject enjoyed the same immunity from unwarranted interference as the Italian. The Italian consul, at the cost of much inconvenience and annoyance to himself, would stand by

a fellow-citizen until he obtained his rights. The authorities, knowing this, were frightened to interfere with any man who was carrying on a legitimate business. The Italian consul knew that he had his Government behind him in protecting Italian trade, and that his mission was to carry on warfare with the German; nor did he scruple to use the same weapons as his adversary. He was even capable of going one better. Perhaps of all the peoples of Europe the Italian alone understands the peculiar character of the German—an experience that has been bought at the price of much suffering. He knows that it is fatal to wait until the German takes the offensive. The blow must come from the other side. Then the German's indolence will make him careful of provoking an adversary of this calibre a second time. The Prussian is essentially a bully; he can only be brought to reason by a frontal attack, and those who know him will not hesitate to make it with or without excuse, provided they get in the first blow, for the struggle must come sooner or later.

CHAPTER XXVII

PUNITIVE EXPEDITION OR WORLD-WAR?

GERMANY and Austria-Hungary hastened on their preparations. Transports of munitions were hurried to the front. The building of the new War Ministry in Vienna, which had long been proceeding, was hurried on. The Government did not care to go to war with all the mobilisation plans lying in the old building. It was situated in a crowded part of the city close to the flower market. It would have been very easy to blow up the entire structure. Many of the Slavs within the Empire would not have hesitated to use their opportunity of throwing everything into confusion. The new War Office on the Ringstrasse, built in the newest and worst style of architecture, was easily guarded.

The German preparations were on a much vaster scale than those made in Austria-Hun-

gary. Germany was preparing for a world-war, Austria-Hungary for a punitive expedition against Servia. Austria has always been solicitous of the good opinion of other countries. She now sent out batches of official despatches intended to incriminate Servia in the eyes of Europe. Germany, who cared little upon what pretext she began the Great War, and knew that she must earn hatred for herself throughout the civilised world, did nothing to prepare the world. She knew that it was a general war. Why waste time and efforts in justifying Germany's right to be "über alles"? Conquerors of the world do not stop to explain their methods.

As the weeks went by Austria-Hungary began to weaken in her resolve. German diplomatists noticed the hesitation. They suggested that a stiff Note should be sent to Servia. When the text of the famous Note appeared, it was noticed that the phraseology was not Austrian. It was not couched in the soft language—a sort of modified German—spoken on the banks of the Danube, but in the rude terms heard farther north. Everyone said that the text of the Note had been written in Berlin. It is just possible that Count Tisza had been a party to it. He kept up constant

intercourse with Berlin, and may have visited the Emperor or been consulted over the telephone. The intention of the Note was clear. No State with any claim to sovereign rights could accept it. Austria-Hungary demanded the right to send her own police to Servia to investigate the crime of Sarajevo, although it had been committed on Austrian ground by Austrian subjects. No Serb was implicated. The Austrian Government was unable to bring any proofs of Servian complicity beyond vague assertions that the assassin had received instruction in military exercises in the ranks of a volunteer corps in Belgrade. Austria relied upon the strength of unproven assertions to establish an absolutely untenable case. The Note was not only couched in the most insulting terms; it demanded an answer within forty-eight hours. During those forty-eight hours strong diplomatic pressure was brought to bear upon Servia. She finally consented to eat humble pie. She was willing to do this in spite of her recent conquests. She had vanquished Bulgaria and had added considerably to the extent of her territory. Russia fully appreciated her position. It was difficult for any Government to accept the terms of such a Note, for the people could not be expected to

understand the political necessity. Nevertheless, at four o'clock on the fatal Saturday, news was received from Belgrade that Servia had resolved to submit. Her diplomatists said that she had no choice. Her army was exhausted. Her stock of munitions was low. She needed all her available funds to carry on the work of reconstruction of the devastated country. The Albanians, in the newly acquired regions, were giving continual trouble. They descended from their mountains and stole cattle from the Serbs. Expeditions had been sent against them, but, as the Serbs said, the Albanians had been accustomed from time immemorial to make an annual descent into the plains for the purpose of re-victualling, and the fact that the land where their depredations were made belonged to Servia instead of being a part of the decrepit Turkish Empire made no difference. Many of the Albanians hardly knew of the change of government. They needed cattle and corn, and naturally made raids to get it. Servia, however, was forced to keep an army on the frontier because of them.

These considerations, and the pressure brought to bear by the Russian Ambassador, rendered Servia willing to consent to any terms.

Russia stood by her small ally, and sent out

an official warning that she could "not remain indifferent to Servia's fate." This softened the natural chagrin felt by the small State in yielding to Austria. Servia's answer was a soft reply to a rough question. She accepted most of the cruel conditions imposed upon her, but desired to refer one point to a Hague Convention. Everyone in Austria considered the answer sufficient. The news circulated in Vienna that the crisis was over. An emissary from the Vatican, who had been working hard for peace, spread the joyful news through the city. His face shone with satisfaction as he passed from group to group in the waiting crowd. "It was a near thing," he said, "but the Serbs are well advised to give in."

Big financiers breathed again, and some of the newspapers began printing extra editions. The editions were mere sheets of paper, distributed gratis, as newspapers may not be hawked in the streets in Austria. They quoted an article in the Servian official paper, saying that Servia was willing to give in to the demands.

Time went on; such information as could be obtained from persons connected with foreign diplomatic circles confirmed the news of peace.

As evening set in the news was received that

the official answer from Servia had come. It was quite satisfactory. The Austrian Government had never thought of Servia's making such complete surrender. Many people started off for week-ends in the country, sure that the *communiqué* that would be issued by the Vienna Foreign Office that night would be merely an elaboration of the news already spread throughout the city.

The Vienna Bourse, which had been falling slowly and steadily ever since the assassination of the Archduke, had reached its lowest point that morning. Servia's answer had reached Vienna in time to effect a lightning improvement, and prices were better than they had been since the beginning of the crisis. Thus there resulted the remarkable phenomenon that prices were steady and firm on the very day that a world-war was decided. The Bourse was closed for many months after the fatal Saturday, the official closing prices remaining a remarkable testimony to the narrowness of the margin between war and peace. While the great financiers played on a peace basis, others waited. Why was the *communiqué* not issued? Was there a hitch? It was known that Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian Minister, had telephoned to Berlin. He wished

to consult with the Kaiser before accepting the reply as sufficient. The German Government said it was too late to retreat; Serbia's answer must not be accepted, and counselled Berchtold to recall the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade. Count Berchtold followed Germany's advice; the news became known in Vienna very quickly. Extra editions were distributed, saying that the Minister had left Belgrade and that diplomatic relations with Serbia were broken off. Austrian officials let it be known that no declaration of war would be made, and that a Great Power would not parley with Serbia. Gunboats had already started down the Danube to bombard Belgrade. Austria considered that a small force would be sufficient to subjugate Serbia, and in the city people spoke of the promenade into Belgrade. This news was circulated to make any subsequent retreat or withdrawal impossible.

No one thought of a great war that night, for the news that Russia intended to stand by Serbia had been carefully kept back.

Count Berchtold, having committed the Government to war, had a difficult task before him. It was very doubtful whether Emperor Francis Joseph could be prevailed upon to sign the order for a general mobilisation. Large

bodies of troops had already left for both the Servian and Russian fronts, but no general mobilisation could take place without an order signed by the Emperor. The aged monarch was anxious that Servia should be chastised. But he did not wish to risk a world-war. He was afraid of Russia, with her immense resources both in men and material. It was now that the long years of work accomplished by German diplomacy in Vienna bore fruit.

Tchirsky, the German Ambassador, visited Count Berchtold. He showed him that Austria must go to war or lose her position as a Great Power in Europe. There would be a world-war, but it must come. Germany intended to go to Paris and St. Petersburg. This was an opportunity such as might never come again. It was only the question of dealing with the old Emperor. If he knew the truth, he would never sign the mobilisation order. Why should he be consulted? He did not know of the Russian Note. Why not keep it back until the irrevocable decision had been taken?

Berchtold listened to the voice of the tempter and fell. He informed the Emperor that Europe would look on with folded hands while Servia was chastised for the assassination of the Archduke. This seemed very natural to the

old autocrat. He was in residence at Ischl, as usual in summer-time, and had no opportunity of conversing with anyone who could have told him the truth about Russia.

It is doubtful whether Berchtold was fully aware of the magnitude of the decision he had taken upon himself. He was fully aware that he was deceiving the Emperor, and excused his conduct by his conviction that the ruler was no longer capable of judging what was best for the country. He had been attacked by the Vienna Press for years. He was accused of feebleness and weakness by Count Tchirsky's organs; now he would show strength and resolution. As often happens with weak men, he showed it at the wrong time.

When the news of war was announced in Vienna, the crowd immediately started for the Servian Legation. The Serbs, with great astuteness, had always chosen a legation that could not be looted or even damaged without the rest of the house being pulled down. They always took the quiet apartments at the back of one of the immense barrack-like houses that line the great streets in Vienna. Demonstrations had been made frequently in front of the Legation during the last few weeks, and the crowd reached the street to find it blocked by troops. It then turned towards the Embassy

quarter. The Vienna police were well prepared. Several regiments of soldiers had been called out to assist them, and the Embassies being for the most part close together, it was easy to guard them. None the less, it was a stirring night. The procession divided into two streams. One went to the French Embassy, the other turned its steps towards the Russian and British Embassies. Neither Germany nor Austria-Hungary imagined for an instant that England would take part in the fight. They were convinced that she would consider it to her interest to remain neutral. The crowd, however, with a correct instinct, regarded England as an enemy. Three times the roughs broke through the cordon of guards and rushed upon the Embassy buildings, but were turned back by the military. Those in command had received very definite orders. The Embassies were to be protected at all costs. Later on the crowd wreaked its fury upon shops owned by Serbs. They were gutted in a few minutes, and no one interfered. The police even stood by and admired the good work. Serbs and Russians were maltreated in the streets. Terrible incidents occurred. The police were to blame, for it would have been easy to interfere. Just as they had allowed the Mohammedans to

plunder the Serbs and appropriate their belongings at Sarajevo after the assassination, so they permitted the same thing to be done in Vienna. A spirit was roused that will not be easy to quell. The bloodthirstiness of the mob is easily excited, but calming it is another matter, as the old despots in France learned to their cost. The latent quality of cruelty, which is hidden beneath the more obvious characteristics of the Viennese, was seen at its worst. Good-tempered toleration gave way to bestiality. That spirit of fair-play which habitually animates an Austrian crowd was replaced by a desire for other people's belongings. The truce between the members of the various races, kept for half a century, was over. German and Slav were at war. Racial hate flamed up. Passions that will take long to cool were excited. The great and tremendous struggle between the two great predominating races in Eastern Europe, the Germans and the Slavs, had begun.

CHAPTER XXVIII

WHAT WOULD ENGLAND SAY?

NEXT morning the jubilant feeling that had pervaded Vienna the night before was totally gone. A reaction had set in. Everyone realised that the war was not to be a punitive expedition. It was a world-war. The telegram sent by Russia was published to the world, and Austria waited with ill-concealed anxiety to know what England intended to do. Germany was convinced of England's neutrality; she was certain that Italy meant to go in with the two mighty Powers that were to sweep the European chessboard with their mighty armies. Austria-Hungary was not so confident as Germany. She knew that Italy was a most uncertain factor. With diplomatic cunning she had concealed what she knew of Italy's intentions from her ally. She had feared that Germany might not back her if she knew that the two

Central Empires would be forced to stand alone. The Kaiser had always said that he must have a fleet in the Mediterranean at call before he began a world-war. If Italy stood by him, everything was easy. Italy now declared her neutrality. The Austrians expected this, and worse; they said quite freely, "Now that Italy has the chance, she will turn upon us." Guilty consciences helped them to realise the truth. They had oppressed Italy for so long that they never even expected her to do anything but take advantage of the chance. Her statesmen were pessimists. They could never share Kaiser Wilhelm's optimism. They were aware that Austria had played the part of tyrant, and did not expect gratitude. Unaccustomed to keep treaties themselves, they did not expect other people to consider them as binding when a chance of doing better presented itself. Austria, with her cynicism, came much nearer the truth than Germany, who oppressed her Slav subjects and then expected them to join in the song of "Deutschland über Alles" and to love the Fatherland.

The Austrian politician, with a fineness of perception to which his German *compère* is a stranger, understood that England would go in with her allies. Germany argued, "It is

Britain's interest to remain neutral, to capture the whole carrying-trade of Europe." The Austrian people hoped and believed that they might be right, but her politicians had a conviction that Britain would not fall into Germany's carefully-spread toils. The Austrians also suspected that Britain knew more of Germany's aims than she acknowledged. They always complained that Britain was an unknown factor. No statesman laid his cards on the table as the Germans or as they themselves did.

Yet, having no cause to detest Britain, they naturally understood her better than the Germans, who were blinded by the bitterest hate.

Meanwhile, European diplomacy was loth to believe that the last chance of peace was gone. Efforts were made to come to some agreement. These attempts to keep a peace that was already so seriously compromised were only forlorn hopes. It is just possible that, in spite of everything, they might have succeeded had it not been for various pieces of trickery. Germany, whose reputation for honesty still stood high, did not hesitate to stop important telegrams which were on their way to Austria. She had made such costly preparations for war that she considered that it would be inadvisable to withdraw now. Austria was allowed no chance of

reconsidering her decision, although Germany knew that it had been made upon false premises.

The Viennese, now thoroughly frightened at the future, wished ardently for peace. The war for which they had clamoured turned out something very different from what they had expected. They would have to meet enemies on all sides; only the frontier towards Germany was safe. The city of Vienna was hastily fortified. It was no use taking chances. Huge mounds were thrown up on the immense March plain beyond the Danube, where many battles had been fought in the past. Meanwhile, the public took enormous interest in the negotiations which were still being carried on. Sir Edward Grey was the most popular man in the capital for several days. He had always succeeded in keeping peace before. Would he be able to do so again? The reply soon came. Under similar circumstances he had been successful twice before because Germany was not ready. Now she had finished the last of her preparations, and did not wish for compromise.

When the news came that Britain was to stand by Russia and France, there was a burst of rage throughout the country. So much had been hoped from her neutrality. "The Eng-

lish were shopkeepers. Why had they not taken the opportunity that fate afforded them and become rich by supplying the belligerents with arms and provisions?" asked the Austrians, who now said that Germany had deceived them with promises of Italian help and British indifference.

The British living in populous centres felt the sudden change of temperature. Instead of being the most popular among the foreigners, they were suddenly classed with the Italians, who were the most detested. This change affected people in various ways. Some stood firm and were merely amused at the sudden change; other Englishmen, middle-class gentlemen of pure race who had lived for half a lifetime in Austria and Hungary, were hastily naturalised. This was hardly a matter for surprise. They knew that the goods of British subjects might be confiscated and their money forfeited. Having worked all their lives for a competency which they wished to enjoy in their old age, they were naturally loth to see it disappear before their eyes. In their newly-acquired zeal for Austria, however, they could not let the matter rest here. They wrote to the local papers saying that they renounced their country. They had always regretted their

nationality and had never been happy under the rule of their rightful King. The Austrians read these ebullitions with surprise. They said that they were sorry that these men had chosen to join their nation instead of another; they did not want such skunks. The Government then decided to ask all renegades of means to contribute handsomely to the Red Cross funds. Those who wished to remain in the country of their adoption must give a third of their capital to this object. The newly-made Austrians hurried off to the British consul, only to discover that, by becoming naturalised, they had forfeited all right to the assistance usually given to British subjects.

In seaports in Austria and Hungary other Englishmen denounced their friends and acted as spies in the service of the Austrian Government. They were men of means. Conduct that might be condoned, if not excused, in members of the poverty-stricken international colony, which knows no country and floats from capital to capital in search of a bare subsistence, was regarded as detestable in men of pure Anglo-Saxon nationality without the slightest admixture of foreign blood.

The women, curiously enough, trusted to the Austrians and Hungarians to do them no ill.

British diplomatists, fearing for the younger women, gave their last ready money to get them out before the declaration of war; but the English girls were not impressed with the necessity of leaving. They were convinced that Austria did not intend to imperil her chance of future negotiation by ill-treating women and children.

At the same time there was no show of love for the enemy. They preferred to lose all they possessed rather than to attempt to become naturalised. In the same way the British sportsmen went almost to a man to concentration camps rather than toady to the enemy. These men were born in Austria-Hungary for the most part. Many came of families that were virtually Austrian, as they had lived generation after generation in the country. Some sporting instinct had prevented their grandfathers from taking out naturalisation papers. The same feeling stopped the grandsons from any truckling to the enemy.

The most remarkable result of the war was perhaps the stripping off of all pretences. People who had always posed as being excessively rich suddenly confessed themselves to be paupers or to have lived beyond their means. Brave men became cowards; and people whose courage had often been doubted were revealed

as creatures of the old bulldog type. The diplomatist had a difficult time. The consuls dealt out passports by the hundred. Sometimes, with a dozen girls all clamouring for their papers at once and literally hanging on to their coat-tails, they looked more like stage-managers surrounded by chorus girls than anything else. "My dear ladies, we are at war," a plaintive voice was heard. "You really must put down the age you look." . . . "No, I don't doubt your word; I know you are only twenty-four, but at the frontier they will say the passport is stolen. . . . Forty-five now . . . yes, that is more like it." "No, it really can't be done. . . . As I told the lady over there, you will have trouble when you want to cross. . . . We know you have had a wearing life, and are really much younger than you look . . . six children does take it out of one . . . yes, yes . . . fifty-five will do."

CHAPTER XXIX

AUSTRIA'S AWAKENING

"ENTRANCE to these barracks is forbidden." Sentries stood there to enforce the new regulation. What did it mean? The steady tramping of troops had been heard all night. It was not the irregular tread of Austrians or Hungarians, who walk rather than march. The new troops kept step; they moved with the precision of machinery. In a wineshop round the corner from the barracks old Viennese burghers were sitting, and although it was only 9 a.m. they were taking their mid-morning lunch. They ate their rye bread and salami, washed down by white wine from the vineyards on the mountains round the city, which rivalled champagne in taste. Slowly and deliberately they discussed recent events. Prussian troops had come on in the night. Vienna was under German rule.

The Austrian troops were being hurried to the front. Some were going to Galicia, others towards Servia, and a third lot towards the Italian front. "No one knows what the Italians may do. . . . If only we had kept on good terms with them, we could face the Germans to-day." "We must not grumble. It was a choice—either fall into the hands of the Germans or be overwhelmed with Slavs." "I prefer the Germans," said a fair-haired burgher. "They are kinsmen at least." "Not the Prussians. You don't know the Prussians. They are the last word in unscrupulousness." "Clever they are, but without any of the finer feelings. Save us from the Prussians," said another. "The Slavs will prosper in spite of the war." "They are to be put into the front of the battle." "What will be the use of that? It is only one generation, and there are large families of children at home." "The Slav mothers will bring up their children to hate us for this. We shall have more enemies within our borders." "The German children will die from want and neglect. Their mothers are accustomed to comfort, even to luxury; they cannot till the fields and bring in the crops. But the Slavs, who are used to poverty and hardship, will weather the storm." "Yes, you are right; that

is all we shall gain from this war—a Slavonic Austria-Hungary overrun by Serbs and Croats, who will trade with our Czechs.” “God save us from the Prussians!” That was heard time and time again as the Austrians realised that the days of happy-go-lucky drifting were over for ever, and that all their affairs were handed over to the care of Prussians. The Austrian always shows great delicacy of feeling. He is not far behind the Frenchman in this. The German does not know the significance of the word. His dealings with Austrian officials, who were suddenly superseded by Germans, were on the mailed-fist principle. “The Prussian could not behave decently, even if he tried!” “Trample upon the weak; fling the incapable into the street!” These were the bitter remarks heard on all sides.

The most imposing but saddest sight of all during the mobilisation was the arrival of the aged Emperor and his heir in Vienna. The old man, seated in an open carriage, although the heat was intense, stared at the vacancy in front of him. His lips were tightly closed. His heir, a stripling who looks much younger than his years, looked right and left. The crowd cheered and outdid itself in its expressions of loyalty. There was no joy in the voices

of the people, but a lingering tone of regret. "Was this the last time that the Emperor would ride by in state?" "Was his place to be taken by another?"

The Vienna crowd, which had always been sullen and refused to cheer when Kaiser Wilhelm passed through the streets, had gauged events with perfect justice. The old man and the stripling—as they called the Archduke Carl Francis Joseph—were totally unfit to cope with the Kaiser. The Habsburgs would sink into a subordinate position and be nothing more than other German princes, once independent, who had sunk into subserviency to the Prussians. The people, with dim eyes, cheered again. The Emperor had always been popular. His general audiences, where he received all and sundry who had a good case to lay before him, his personal courage, which needed no proof, and other kingly qualities, always endeared him to the crowd. After ordering the execution of large numbers of political criminals in the days of his youth and middle age, he sought to compensate for this in his old age by pardoning many criminals. He could not be induced to sign a death sentence. This mercy shown towards men who richly deserved death for their many crimes made him popular. The

crowd saw no discrepancy in the acts of a sovereign who would slay a hundred men who attempted to gain freedom for the country without scruple in his youth, and in fear of punishment after death, refused to permit wrongdoers to be executed as the time of his passing away grew nearer. They failed to understand the Emperor's motive. He hoped that Heaven would overlook his former crimes towards the subject-peoples if he could show a contra-account of deeds of mercy.

Archduke Carl Francis Joseph wore an imperturbable expression. No one could fathom the state of his mind. Was he merely thinking of his own private affairs, or was he concerned for the fate which hung over Austria-Hungary? Who shall say? Did he prefer to live as a ruler without responsibilities, like the King of Saxony, to the toil of the life of a reigning monarch? So many of the Habsburgs have abdicated when the responsibilities of a throne have descended upon them, so many members of the Imperial family have left the pomp and splendour of the Court for a quiet life in retirement, that it is difficult to surmise what feelings filled the heart of the young man as he looked forwards to Armageddon.

The Emperor's feelings were plain. He had

always said, "Après moi le déluge," but he realised that the deluge would not wait for his death. His reign, which had begun to the sound of battle and dire defeat, was to end to the death-song of the Empire. The sceptre that his ancestors had confided to him was slipping from his grasp. His adversaries had been too much for him. Kaiser Wilhelm had used methods which were not permitted even to politicians. He had broken faith with his ally. The Emperor, the keener man of the two, was too old, and had not suspected the depths of falsity under the mask of frank *bonhomie*. Kaiser Wilhelm had even deceived the Church, always the adviser and comforter of the old Emperor.

